This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

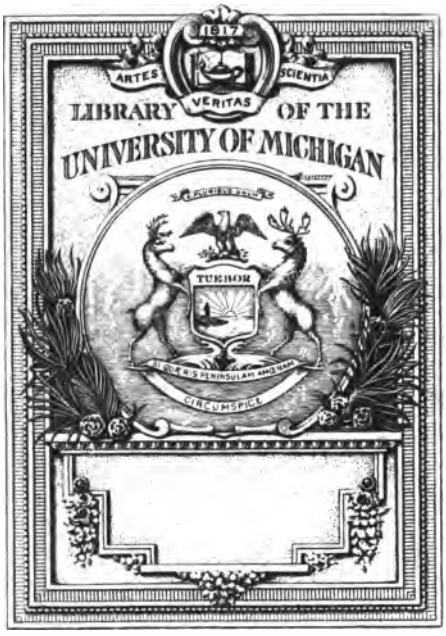
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

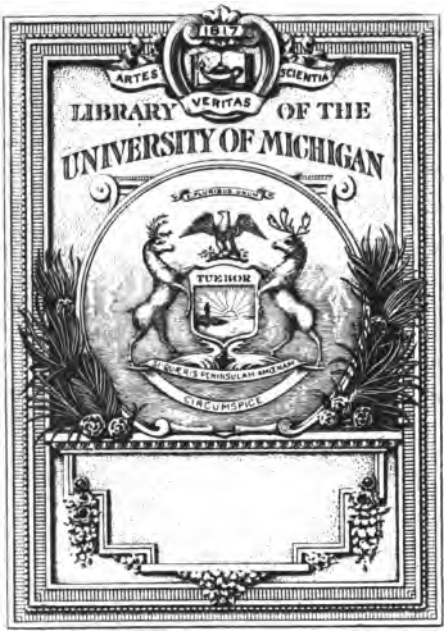
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



Digitized by Google

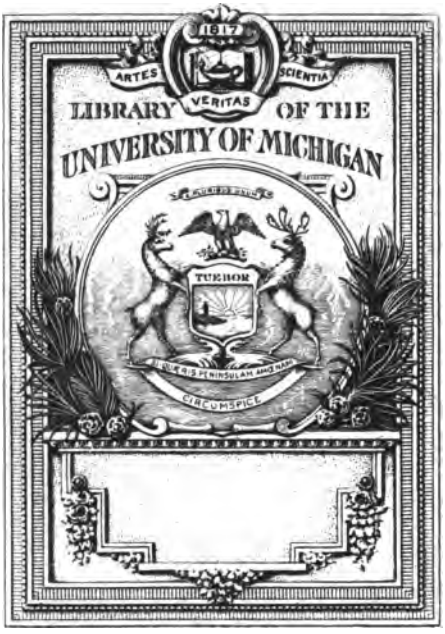
800
M736
1774

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

800
M736
1774

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

18677

OF THE

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

OF

LANGUAGE.

Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo
Muſa loqui.——— HORAT.

GENERAL LIBRARY
University of
MICHIGAN

VOL. III.

THE SECOND EDITION.

1ST 1774

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND;
AND J. BALFOUR, EDINBURGH.
MDCCLXXXVI.

1786

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE public demand has made a ſecond edition proper, of this third volume of the Origin and Progreſs of Language, which completes the work; the firſt volume containing the Hiſtory of Language, its origin and progreſs among the barbarous nations—The ſecond, conſidering it as an art brought to perfection by nations more civilized, and explaining the ſcience and philoſophy of it—The third, ſhewing how words, the doctrine of which had been explained in the preceding part, are to be put together, ſo as to form what we call Style. Of theſe three parts the

Digitized by Google

theory of language conſiſts: and, however defective the execution may be, I think I can venture to ſay, that the plan is as complete and as comprehenſive as any that ever was executed, or even propoſed upon the ſubject.

The learned of this age, though they be ſo much occupied with facts of natural hiſtory, minerals, plants, flies, and reptiles, that they have no time to apply to the hiſtory and philoſophy of their own ſpecies; yet I ſhould think they would have ſome curioſity about an art ſo exceedingly uſeful, by which the whole buſineſs of human life is carried on; by which arts and ſciences have been conveyed from man to man, and from nation to nation, and from the earlieſt to the lateſt ages; and without which they could not have been inſtructed in the knowledge they value ſo much: for

Digitized by Google

how elſe could they profit by the moſt accurate account of inſects, which Reaumur has given in ſix volumes in quarto, containing the hiſtory of flies with two wings, and flies with four wings, with a ſupplement to the hiſtory of flies with two wings; but which he very modeſtly intitles not a hiſtory, but only Memoires pour ſervir à l'Hiſtoire des Inſectes.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

CONTENTS.

PART II.

BOOK IV.

Page

INTRODUCTION, - - - - 1

Chap.

1. Diviſion of ſtyle into ſingle words, and the compoſition of thoſe words—Each of theſe heads ſubdivided—General plan of this part of the work, - - - 10

2. Of changes made upon the ſound of words, for the greater beauty and variety of compoſition—Examples of ſuch changes in Greek—Much fewer in modern languages—Examples of ſome in Engliſh, - 15

3. Of proper words—Diviſion of them into radical and derivative—Another diviſion of them into ſuch as are of the original ſtock of the language, and ſuch as are foreign—Thoſe of Latin extraction moſtly derived from corrupt Latinity—The reſtoring them to their genuine ſignification a beauty of ſtyle, - - - - 23

Digitized by Google

Chap. Page

4. Of Tropes, and the different kinds of them; particularly of metaphors—Metaphors uſed from neceſſity as well as for ornament—Obſervations on the uſe of metaphors, - - - 31

5. Of the ſecond part of ſtyle, viz. compoſition —This conſidered, firſt, with reſpect to ſound—That diverſified in the learned languages by muſical tones and rhythms, which we have not—The ſound, therefore, in our compoſition, can only be varied by the order of the words, and by periods—Each of theſe conſidered, and illuſtrated by examples, - - 45

6. Of figures of ſyntax—The Ellipſis—The Parentheſis—Repetition——Paronomaſia—Like endings—Pariſoſis—Inconſequence —Foreign idioms—A figure of Milton without example—Tranſpoſition of words, 65

7. Recapitulation—Of the figures by which the ſenſe is varied—Theſe divided into three kinds—Of the firſt is Exclamation—Hyperbole—Epithet—Proſopopoeia—And Deſcription, - - 106

8. Of the ſecond kind of compoſition, figured with reſpect to the ſenſe, viz. by the imi-

Digitized by Google

Chap. Page

tation of characters—The difference betwixt this kind of ſtyle and the pathetic —The difference betwixt deſcribing and imitating a character—The Ethic ſtyle belongs both to Poetry and Rhetoric, but in different reſpects, - - 122

9. The great variety of compoſition illuſtrated by an example.—Of the third kind of figures of the ſenſe—Some of theſe named, ſuch as Interrogation—Antitheſis—Simile —Allegory—Many more of ſuch figures have no name—The uſe of them in compoſition—Examples of them from Virgil's Georgics, and Dr. Armſtrong's Poem on Health—Praiſe of that Poem—Concluſion of what relates to the figures of ſpeech—Apology for the Author's being ſo minute in explaining them, - - 137

10. An apology for the ſtyle of the author—The three general characters of ſtyle: The ſimple, the highly ornamented, and the middle between theſe two—Nature and uſe of the ſimple ſtyle—Lyſias, the firſt who brought this ſtyle to perfection—Menander, and his tranſlator, Terence, are perfect models of it—Among the moderns, Dean Swift, in his Gulliver's Travels, has excelled in it, - - 181

Digitized by Google

Chap. Page

11. Of the ornamented ſtyle—This divided into two kinds, the auſtere and the florid—Of the firſt kind is the ſtyle of Thucydides—Character of that ſtyle—Of the ſtyle of Salluſt, - - - 198

12. Of the ſtyle of Tacitus—That ſtyle conſidered by many as a model—Not an original ſtyle, but an imitation of Salluſt—General obſervations upon it—Particular examples—Of his unconnected compoſition—Of abrupt and harſh—Of obſcure brevity—Of affectation in the expreſſion, and obſcurity thence ariſing—Compared in this reſpect with Julius Cæſar—Poetical diction of Tacitus—Poetical deſcription—Quaintneſs and affectation of ſmartneſs—Praiſe of Tacitus as to his matter—Some things alſo in his ſtyle commendable—Effect that the imitation of him has had upon the ſtyle of modern writers—The beſt imitation of him is in Mr. Mallet's Life of Chancellor Bacon, - - - 210

13. The ſtyle of Tacitus has the general character of the ſtyle of the age—The ſchools of declamation the cauſe of ſo general a corruption of taſte among the Romans coming on ſo faſt—The beginning of thoſe ſchools

Digitized by Google

Chap. Page

at Rome, and the progreſs of them—The bad effects of them upon the taſte of writing of all kinds—Some ſpecimens of their ſtyle—Seneca the philoſopher's ſtyle of the ſame kind - - - 259

14. Of the other kind of ornamented ſtyle, the gay and florid—Antient authors who have written in that ſtyle—Modern, ſuch as my Lord Shaftſbury—Character of this ſtyle - - 282

15. Of the middle ſtyle—Examples of that ſtyle, antient and modern, 286

16. Of a fourth general character of ſtyle, the ſublime—It conſiſts chiefly of the matter—Examples of it—The counterpart of the ſublime, or mock-heroic—Examples of this ſtyle, antient and modern—Improper uſe of it by Mr. Fielding, in his hiſtory of Tom Jones—Of a ſixth general character of ſtyle, the ridiculous—The meaning of the word—The nature of the thing—The reaſon of the pleaſure it gives us—General obſervations upon it—Vanity and affectation the proper ſubjects of it—Examples of a proper and an improper ridiculous character—Authors antient and modern that have excelled in the ridiculous—It does not belong to the greateſt geniuſes, 288

Digitized by Google

Chap. Page

17. Of another general character of ſtyle, viz. the witty—Nature of wit, and the three things which it requires—Examples of this from the laconic apophthegms—from the ſayings of philoſophers, and from Cicero—Wit ariſes from the ambiguity of words, either ſingle or in compoſition—from metaphor—ſimile—antitheſis, - 315

18. The difference betwixt humour and a humouriſt—One ſpecies of humour is the imitation of the humouriſt—a general definition of it—Uſe of it in modern comedy—incompatible with wit, - - 342

19. Particular characters of ſtyle—Firſt, the ſtyle of converſation—quite different from that of public ſpeaking—The epiſtolary ſtyle—more conciſe than that of converſation—The didactic ſtyle—of two kinds—The different manner of the two didactic poems of Virgil and Lucretius—The hiſtorical ſtyle—It conſiſted of two parts among the antients—narrative and rhetorical—Is only narrative among the moderns—but the narrative often too rhetorical and poetical, 349

20. General obſervations—Compoſition an art as well as language—The Greeks our maſters both in that art and the other fine arts,

Digitized by Google

Chap. Page

ſuch as ſculpture—The Romans likewiſe our maſters, but at ſecond-hand—only to be imitated in ſo far as they themſelves imitated the Greeks—Praiſe of the ſtyle of Horace—Julius Cæſar—Cicero—Upon the revival of letters, the Greek writers moſt ſtudied and imitated, particularly in England, - - - 370

21. The neceſſity of forming a ſtyle by imitation—The Greek authors the beſt models for imitation—Next to them the Latin—Who next to the Greek and Latin?—Not the writings of the French *Beaux Eſprits* of this age—Examination of thoſe French writers, both as to their matter and ſtyle—The imitation of our own authors, who have formed themſelves upon the antient models, is beſt, next to the imitation of the Greek and Latin, - - 393

22. Compoſition not ſo difficult in Engliſh as in Greek and Latin—This ariſes from the want of rhythm and melody in our language, and the variety of ſtructure of the antient languages—What is proper and ſuitable, eſſential in writing as well as in other arts—Art ſhould not appear too much in compoſition—The practice of making different ſtyles of the ſame words uſeful—Tranſlation, and the uſe to be made of it, 403

Digitized by Google

Chap. Page

23. Of the ſophiſtical ſtyle—Three ſeveral ſpecieſes of it—The pedantic—the florid—and the auſtere—The preſent ſtyle generally of the ſecond kind—The antient authors who have written in this ſtyle—not approved of by the firſt reſtorers of learning—The cauſes that produce the ſophiſtical ſtyle—Men of buſineſs the beſt writers, if not deficient in genius and learning—Sir John Checke's judgment in this matter, 413

24. A ſhort account of the fate of antient learning in the ſeveral periods of the world—All the learning of Europe originally from Egypt—The firſt great blow to learning the deſtruction of the colleges of the Egyptian prieſts—The ſecond, the deſtruction of the Pythagorean colleges in Italy—The third, the loſs of the liberty of Greece, and the extinction of learning and good taſte there—The fourth, the loſs of liberty at Rome, and the corruption of taſte there—The fifth, the conqueſts of the Saracens and Turks—The preſent ſtate of antient learning in Europe—How the taſte of it is to be revived, - - - 435

25. Concluſion of this part of the work—Two kinds of men will deſpiſe it—the avaricious and the luxurious—Something ſaid to the firſt of theſe—more to the laſt—Lei-

Digitized by Google

Page

ſure, which is thought ſo great a bleſſing, is the greateſt ſource of human miſery, if not well employed—Education only can enable men to employ leiſure well—Bodily exerciſes formerly employed much time—Theſe now laid aſide—Arts and ſciences now only remain to fill up leiſure—By theſe only we have any advantages over ſavages—The Romans a ſtriking example of the effect of Greek philoſophy and arts—Theſe preſerved virtue among them in the moſt degenerate times—Another uſe of antient learning is to improve our luxury, and prevent, as far as poſſible, the bad effects of it—The want of it in this reſpect among us, and the fatal conſequences of ſuch want, - - - - 445

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

THE ſubject of this volume is *Style*, the next ſtep in the progreſs of language after the grammatical part is completed—A ſubject of great importance, as it is by *ſtyle* only that language is made fit to anſwer the great purpoſes of life.

Now that I am ſo far advanced in this work, I begin to be ſenſible that it is not at all of a faſhionable or popular kind. In the firſt part of it, which treats of the origin of language, I have been led, by my ſubject, to give an account of human nature, in what may be called its infantine ſtate, ſuch as will be thought by many highly derogatory from its dignity, and will therefore give great offence. My attempt alſo, to revive the old philoſophy of Plato and Ariſtotle, will much diſpleaſe thoſe who think we have arrived to the ſummit of philoſophy and ſcience of every kind; and it will be thought by them

Digitized by Google

a diſgrace to this very learned age, that it ſhould be propoſed to us to go to ſchool again, and return to thoſe maſters once ſo revered by our anceſtors, but now almoſt univerſally exploded.

It is for the honour of this antient philoſophy, that there has been no example, as far as I know, of any man learned in it who was addicted to that *mad philoſophy*, ſo prevalent in our days, which excludes *mind* from the ſyſtem of the univerſe. The philoſophers of this kind I have treated not only with indignation, but contempt, as men of whom it may be truly ſaid, what Caligula the emperor ſaid moſt falſely of Virgil the poet, that they are *nullius ingenii et minimae doctrinae.* To ſuch men, whoſe chief motive for publiſhing doctrines ſo pernicious to mankind is vanity, and an affectation of ſuperior parts, I muſt have given moſt deadly offence.

In my firſt volume, I may be ſaid to have attacked *human* vanity, by what I have ſaid of man in his natural ſtate. And, in my ſecond volume, I have ſhocked the *national*

Digitized by Google

vanity by the account I have given of our language and poetry, compared with those of the antients. But, in this volume, by what I have said of *style*, and of those great antient masters of the writing art, the study and imitation of whom can alone, in my judgment, form a good style, I am afraid I have raised up against myself a more formidable set of enemies than any I have hitherto mentioned; I mean the fashionable authors of this age, who have acquired great reputation as well as profit by their writings, and yet must be conscious that it is not upon those models they have formed their style. I am desirous of the praise of very few; but I would not willingly give offence to any; and, if those gentlemen will accept as an apology what follows, I shall be glad of it. In the first place, then, if they have really formed so fine a style and taste of writing, as they and their admirers suppose, without the assistance of learning, it is the greater praise of their genius and natural parts, and they may with justice despise me and others who grovel so meanly after the antients, *adoring, at a distance, those foot-steps* in which we must confess ourselves

Digitized by Google

unable to tread. Nor have I ſaid any thing of their writings in particular, though I have taken the liberty of animadverting pretty ſeverely upon the ſtyle of ſome antient authors. They may, therefore, for me, admire themſelves as much as ever; and their panegyriſts may continue to ſet them up as ſtandards for ſtyle and compoſition, and worthy to take the place of the old claſſics, when they ſhall be intirely neglected and forgot. Further, I acknowledge, that, if I had addreſſed this work to them, in which I have ſo much extolled authors that they do not read or underſtand, it would have been very ill-bred; but they ſhould conſider, that I write not for them, but chiefly for the ſcholars in England, and for the few that the prevalence of the French learning has left yet remaining in other parts of Europe. If this does not ſatisfy them, nothing remains but that they ſhould continue to abuſe me in Magazines and Reviews, by themſelves or ſome nameleſs ſcribblers that they inſtigate, ſecure againſt any anſwers from me. For, though I think myſelf very much obliged to thoſe who correct the many errors

Digitized by Google

I muſt have fallen into in the courſe of ſo long and ſo various a work, and am ready to acknowledge the obligation upon every occaſion, I am not ſo meanly vain as to value either the cenſure or applauſe of ignorance:

Falſus honor juvat, aut mendax infamia terret,
Quem niſi mendoſum aut mendacem.

But, whatever they may ſay of my knowledge of antient learning, they ſhould not, out of regard to the credit of the country, ſay any thing to the diſparagement of the learning itſelf, nor publiſh to the world, that a man in Scotland cannot be a good Greek and Latin ſcholar, without running the hazard of being eſteemed a man of no taſte or genius for ſcience *. For,

* In the Edinburgh Magazine and Review for the month of July 1775, there is a review of Mr Harris's Philoſophical Arrangements, which concludes in this manner:—'Upon the whole, Mr Harris, even in 'the preſent volume, with all its imperfections, has 'an elevation of ſentiment that riſes above the ordi-'nary reach of mere claſſical ſcholars. He may be 'conſidered as a ſingular exception to a general and 'well-founded obſervation, that thoſe who have been

Digitized by Google

though it be true that antient literature is much declined among us, it is heartily regretted, not only by the ſcholar, but every man of ſenſe and lover of his country, as the loſs of what was once the greateſt ornament of this country.

' remarkable for their ſkill in Greek and Latin, have ' ſeldom diſcovered a good taſte, or any talents for ' philoſophical diſquiſition.'

What would thoſe ſcribblers be at? Would they put an end to the grammatical art, which is only learned by the ſtudy of theſe languages? Do they not know that a rude, imperfect language, ſuch as ours, cannot be otherways improved than by the ſtudy of more perfect languages? Would they deſtroy all beauty, elegance, and even perſpicuity of ſtyle? Would they have our learning and philoſophy to ſpeak a language as barbarous as the German metaphyſics of Leibnitz, or the Swediſh natural hiſtory of Linnaeus, which are not even intelligible, except to thoſe who have made a particular ſtudy of their *lingos*? Ought not the public to reſent ſuch an attempt to put down our whole ſchool, and a great part of our univerſity education, and to render it impoſſible for our country ever to make again ſo conſpicuous a figure in the great council of the nation as it does at preſent, by men who derive from *antient* learning, not only the ornaments of ſpeech, but an elevation of ſpirit and ſentiment which that learning, and that learning only, can beſtow?

Digitized by Google

Upon the whole, in an age in which the nomenclature of plants, and facts of natural hiſtory, are the chief ſtudy of thoſe who pretend to learning; and, in the faſhionable world, the foppery of modern languages and foreign wit (to uſe an expreſſion of my Lord Shafteſbury) are reckoned the chief accompliſhments, I cannot expect that a work of this kind ſhould be much reliſhed. Nevertheleſs, I am not ſorry to have left, before I die, this memorial behind me, that the taſte and knowledge of antient philoſophy, and antient literature, was not, in the year 1776, wholly loſt in Scotland, notwithſtanding the endeavours of certain perſons to diſcredit this kind of learning, merely from a conſciouſneſs that they themſelves do not excel in it; for I aver, that there is no example of any man who truly underſtood the antient learning, and did not prefer it to every other.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

Digitized by Google

OF THE
ORIGIN AND PROGRESS
OF
LANGUAGE.

PART II. BOOK IV.

OF STYLE.

INTRODUCTION.

LANGUAGE being formed in the manner I have deſcribed in the preceeding volume, and completed both in ſenſe and ſound; what remains is to apply it to the purpoſe for which it was invented, that is, the communication of our thoughts to one another. This is done by compoſing, either in ſpeaking, or in writing. The com-

Digitized by Google

poſition I here mean is not that by which words are put together in ſyntax, or grammatical conſtruction; for that belongs to the grammatical art, and I have already treated of it; but I mean the *manner* of expreſſing our thoughts, and which is commonly known by another name, viz. *ſtyle*. For, in every compoſition of words, we muſt diſtinguiſh three things; the ſubject or matter of the compoſition; the order or method in which that ſubject is treated; and, *laſtly*, the ſtyle or manner of the expreſſion, which may be very different, the ſubject and method continuing the ſame.

As it is by ſtyle or compoſition that language produces its effect, and anſwers the purpoſe for which it was intended, the nature of this work, which is a general theory of language, requires that we ſhould treat of it as well as the grammatical part of language.

Compoſition, as I have ſaid, may be either in ſpeaking or in writing; but of theſe two, ſpeaking is ſo much the nobler art, by how much language is not only more antient, but of greater uſe, as well as more

Digitized by Google

difficult invention, than the notation of it by characters of any kind, whether alphabetical, hieroglyphical, or, what is more antient than either, natural repreſentations of things. The affairs of life were conducted, and the counſels of men directed by ſpeaking, long before the writing art was invented, nay, are at this day ſo directed among the Indians of North-America, whom we are pleaſed to call barbarous, but who deliberate and determine in matters of public concern with a ſedateneſs, gravity, and attention to the ſpeeches of their orators, which do not at all ſavour of barbarity: And in antient Greece and Rome, even after the invention of letters, their weightieſt affairs, both in war and peace, were decided by ſpeaking. And as to private and domeſtic affairs, they are in all nations conducted chiefly by converſation or diſcourſe. The ſpeaking art has this great advantage too above writing, that, in it, the whole beauty of language is diſplayed; for not only the *form* of it is ſhewn, that is, the expreſſion of our thoughts, but alſo the *matter* or found of it. For, in ſpeaking, it is adorned with rhythms and accents, and all that can

Digitized by Google

be called the muſic of language, beſides the beauty which an agreeable articulation gives to language. And, when to theſe are added the proper changes of voice, ſuch as the ſubject requires, and all the various tones of ſentiment and paſſion, the ear is not only charmed, but the ſenſe more forcibly conveyed. Speaking, therefore, may be ſaid to be language *living*; whereas writing is nothing but the *dead* letter, and only a ſecondary art dependent upon ſpeaking; for the beſt way of judging of the written ſtyle is to give it voice and pronounce it. Whoever, therefore, would excell in writing, ſhould begin with forming his ear, and ſhould be ſure that he is a good judge of ſpeaking; by which I do not mean that it is neceſſary he ſhould be a good reader or ſpeaker (for that depends upon natural organs, of which he may not be poſſeſſed); but he ſhould be a judge of pronunciation, and know what will have a good or bad effect when it is ſpoken. If he want this knowledge, whatever other talents he may have as a writer, his compoſition will certainly be defective. This obſervation applies in a particular manner to all compoſi-

Digitized by Google

tions in writing which are intended to be ſpoken, ſuch as orations and dramatic poetry. The written orations of Demoſthenes would not have had ſuch an effect upon thoſe that read them, as we are told by the antient critics they had *, if he had not perfectly underſtood, as we know he did, the art of pronunciation; and our Shakeſpeare's ſcenes would not pleaſe ſo much, either in the reading or repreſentation, if the poet himſelf had not been an actor, and ſo known what was proper for ſpeaking on the ſtage. For though, as it is reported, he was a bad performer, yet he muſt certainly have been a judge of the art, otherwiſe he could not, by what he has written, have furniſhed to the player ſuch opportunities of diſplaying his talents.

As, therefore, in compoſition the ſpeaking art is principal, being that by which the merit of writing is to be judged, what we ſhall ſay of compoſition muſt be underſtood as chiefly applicable to ſpeaking.

* Dionyſ. Halic. περὶ τῆς δεινότητος τῦ Δημοσθένους cap. 22. *Edit. Hudſon.*

In the beginning of this work, I ſaid I was to treat my ſubject as a matter of ſcience. Whether I have performed my promiſe or not, belongs not to me to judge. One thing is certain, that the ſubjects of which I have treated, particularly the nature and origin of our ideas, and what I have ſaid of the grammatical art, are matters of ſcience, however I may have handled them. But there are many who think, that the ſubject I am now upon does not belong to ſcience, and that the merit of ſtyle and compoſition is to be determined by what they call *Taſte*, a metaphorical expreſſion borrowed from the ſenſe well known by that name. And, if the metaphor be exactly juſt, this ſtandard of judgment ſhould be intirely from nature, and have nothing to do with art, any more than *taſte*, properly ſo called. And if ſo, the common ſaying is certainly juſt, that there is no diſputing about taſte. And indeed in this way the ſubject appears to have been treated by almoſt all our modern writers, who entertain us with a great many words upon the ſubject, which import that they have ſome confuſed natural feelings of what is

Digitized by Google

beautiful or ſtriking in compoſition, but give us no *ideas*, at leaſt none which they have thought proper to explain or define; and not being willing, or not able to inform us what the thing *is*, they have recourſe to metaphors and ſimiles, and ſo endeavour to make us conceive what it is *like*. Of this I am ſure I could produce many examples from French and Engliſh books; but, as I read not to cenſure, but to be inſtructed, and admire, if I can, I have not noted the paſſages, nor will I be at the diſagreeable trouble of ſearching for them and collecting them.

Theſe gentlemen are certainly ſo far in the right, that, unleſs a man have a natural perception of what is beautiful in ſtyle, or any other work of Art, and which may be called natural taſte, there is no art or ſcience can give it him. Such a man may be a very good geometer, or he may be an excellent grammarian, and able to judge whether a ſtyle be according to grammatical rules; but, *unleſs Melpomene has looked on his birth with placid aſpect* *, and given

* Quem tu, Melpomene, ſemel
Naſcentem placido lumine videris. Hor. *lib.* 4. *O.* 3.

Digitized by Google

him that natural taſte and genius, which is neceſſary for the critic as well as the compoſer, he never can be a true judge of the beauties of ſtyle and compoſition. Without that gift of Heaven, he is like the man who pretends to judge of the merit of a tragedy without being ſuſceptible of the paſſions of pity or terror. A critic of that kind might nibble at the diction, and ſhow that the particular words and phraſes were not proper; or, if he had a higher degree of underſtanding, he might find fault with the conduct of the piece, and prove that the unities were not obſerved, or that the events were not ſufficiently connected, and did not ariſe out of one another in a natural and probable manner. But he never could reliſh the true beauties of tragedy, nor reap the benefit which, according to Ariſtotle, ariſes from that poem, namely, correcting the exceſſes of thoſe paſſions of pity and terror, by exerciſing them on feigned ſubjects, and in that way leſſening the effects of them in real life, by making ſuch objects familiar to us.

Digitized by Google

It appears, therefore, that in the critical, as in other arts, nature has done no more than furniſh the materials, that is, the proper faculties of the mind, as, in this caſe, the natural ſenſe of the beautiful in works of nature or art. In the ſame manner, in the matter of language, ſhe has beſtowed on us ideas, at leaſt the capacity of forming them, and likewiſe the organs of pronunciation; and in muſic, ſhe has given us throats capable of varying the voice, by different degrees of gravity and acuteneſs, and an ear that can perceive thoſe differences. But theſe are no more than the raw materials, out of which the art is to be formed by the ſagacity and induſtry of man; as here, out of the natural ſenſe of beauty in ſtyle and compoſition, is to be formed an art, which corrects and improves that natural ſenſe, by teaching us to diſtinguiſh accurately different ſtyles and manners; to know what ornaments belong to each of them; and when theſe ornaments are properly uſed. This art is what is commonly called among us the *critical art*; and it is of it I am now to treat.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

Diviſion of ſtyle into ſingle words, and the compoſition of thoſe words.—Each of theſe heads ſubdivided.—General plan of this part of the work.

BY *ſtyle*, I do not mean every combination of words expreſſing ſome ſenſe; but I mean ſuch a combination, as, in regard either of the words, or the compoſition of theſe words, or both, is ſome way different from ordinary diſcourſe *. It has a certain character by which we diſtinguiſh it, and denominate it the hiſtorical, the didactic, the poetic, the epiſtolary, and the like. Even dialogue writing, though it be in imitation of converſation, is

* When the *Burgeois Gentilhomme, in Moliere*, Act 2. ſc. 4. aſks his maſter in philoſophy, whether, when he calls to his maid—*Nicole, apportez moi mes pantouſles, et ma donnez mon bonnet de nuit*, it be proſe or verſe? the philoſopher anſwers, that it is *proſe*; he might have further added, that, though it was *proſe*, it was not *ſtyle*.

Digitized by Google

nevertheleſs different from ordinary converſation upon the common affairs of life *.

Style conſiſts of two parts; the choice of words, and the compoſition of thoſe words †. And, as the laſt of theſe two is of greateſt variety, and diſtinguiſhes moſt the ſeveral kinds of ſtyle from one another, we commonly, in Engliſh, denominate the whole

* Of this kind of ſtyle are the dialogues of Plato, and alſo the dialogue in our beſt comedies; which, though it be converſation, yet every reader of any taſte will perceive it to be ſomething above the ſtyle of ordinary converſation, as much as the tone and manner of the player who ſpeaks it, is above that of ordinary converſation, though at the ſame time not altogether different from it, if the player has a juſt ſenſe of decorum, and the propriety of the part which he acts.

† Omnis igitur oratio conficitur ex verbis; quorum primum nobis ratio ſimpliciter videnda eſt, deinde conjuncte. Nam eſt quidam ornatus orationis, qui ex ſingulis verbis eſt; alius, qui ex continuatis conjunctiſque conſtat. *De Oratore, lib. 3. cap. 37.*

And, to the ſame purpoſe, the Halicarnaſſian, ἁπασα λεξις εις δυο μερη διαιρειται τα πρωτα, εις τε την ἐκλογην τῶν ὀνοματων, ὑφ' ὧν δηλωται τὰ πραγματα, καὶ εις την συνθεσιν των ἐλαττονων τε και μειζονων μοριων.

De Thucyd. Judicium. p. 237. Edit. Hudſon.

Digitized by Google

from that part, calling ſtyle, in general, by the name of *compoſition*.

Words, taken ſingly are to be conſidered with reſpect either to their ſound or their ſenſe. As to the ſound, they are varied in ſeveral different ways that have been obſerved by grammarians; but, with reſpect to the ſenſe, or meaning, they are only either proper or tropical *.

As to the ſecond part of ſtyle, or compoſition, it is more various; but all its variety may be reduced under three heads. *Firſt*, the ſound of words in compoſition; *ſecondly*, the different ways in which the compoſition may be varied by grammatical conſtruction;

* In this diviſion of ſingle words, I have followed the Halicarnaſſian in the paſſage above quoted, where he ſays, ἡ ἐκλογὴ τῶν στοιχειωδῶν μορίων, σωματικῶν λέγω καὶ ἐημα-τικῶν καὶ συνδετικῶν, εἰς τε τὴν κυρίαν φράσιν διαιρεῖται, καὶ εἰς τὴν τροπικήν. *Ib.* Cicero, in the paſſage above quoted, cap. 38. mentions two other kinds of words, viz. *Old*, or *Obſolete* words, and *New*, that is, words made for the occaſion. But theſe are only ſubdiviſions of the diviſion which I have given; for all words, whether old or new, are either proper or tropical. And I think it is fitter to mention that diſtinction of words, when we come to ſpeak of the particular ſtyles in which they may be properly uſed.

Digitized by Google

and, *laſtly*, the ſeveral changes which are made in the compoſition, by giving a different turn to the thought, and conſequently to the expreſſion. Theſe laſt are called, by critics, *figures of the ſenſe*, as the former are called *figures of conſtruction*.

Of theſe materials all ſtyle is made; for it is of theſe materials, differently uſed, that the didactic and the hiſtoric ſtyle are compoſed; the rhetorical and the poetic, the ſublime, the pathetic, the ethic, the familiar, the epiſtolary, the witty, the humorous, and whatever other difference of ſtyle can be imagined. All theſe may be called the *colours* of ſtyle; and of theſe I propoſe to treat, after having explained the materials above-mentioned, of which ſtyle is compoſed.

This is a ſhort ſummary of what is to be the ſubject of this book. The gentlemen above-mentioned, who think that nothing more is required to make a critic than genius and taſte, will, I know, deſpiſe this exactneſs of order and method. But I hold it to be as impoſſible to be a good critic, without ſcience, to which method is ab-

Digitized by Google

ſolutely neceſſary, as to be a correct ſpeaker, or writer, without learning the grammatical art, or a good performer in muſic, without knowing the gamut. Mere practice will make one both a judge and a performer, to a certain degree, in any art; but it is only ſtudy, and the knowledge of the principles, that will make him excel in any.

I have only further to ſay, before I conclude this chapter, that I do not propoſe to write a full treatiſe of ſtyle and compoſition, any more than I have done of grammar. But my deſign is, *firſt*, to ſhew the whole extent of the ſubject, and to lay down a method, under which every thing that can be ſaid upon it may be brought; and, *ſecondly*, to explain ſome things relating to ſtyle, that have not been ſufficiently explained; and to correct ſome errors that, I think, have been fallen into.

Having premiſed ſo much concerning the plan of this part of my work, I begin with that part of ſtyle which relates to the choice of words; and, *firſt*, I conſider them with reſpect to their ſound.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

Of changes made upon the ſound of words, for the greater beauty and variety of compoſition.—Examples of ſuch changes in Greek.—Much fewer in modern languages.—Examples of ſome in Engliſh.

I Have already, in the grammatical part of my work, ſaid a great deal of the ſound of language. What I am now to ſay on that ſubject will reſpect the changes which, in compoſition, it may be proper to make upon the ſound of words, for the ſake of the pleaſure of the ear. What the ſound of primitive words, in any language, ought naturally to be, is a matter, as we have ſeen*, of very difficult determination. But, with reſpect to compounded words, and ſuch as are formed by derivation and flection, there are, in regular languages, certain rules by which we know what the ſound of them ought to be; and what we are to conſider

* Vol. ii. p. 194.

Digitized by Google

here, is, the changes or alterations of that ſound which they can admit of in compoſition, for the purpoſe of pleaſing the ear.

The Greeks, in the formation of their language, ſtudying the pleaſure of the ear, no leſs than the ſenſe, have made, as I have ſhown elſewhere *, great alterations in their words, for the ſake of a more agreeable ſound, by adding, taking away, changing, or tranſpoſing letters. But it is not the formation of language, of which we are now ſpeaking, but the changes which the words, after they are formed, will admit of. And, if we know by what rules the language is formed, we may know alſo how theſe rules may be varied, ſo as to produce the deſired effect in compoſition, and yet the genius of the language be preſerved: *e. g.* The Greeks, in order to make the ſound of their language fuller and ſtronger, not contented with the ſound of ſingle vowels, have joined together two of them, and made what we call diphthongs. Now, as vowels are thus joined together, ſo as to

* Diſſert. 2. on the ſound of the Greek language, annexed to vol. ii.

Digitized by Google

make one ſound, they may be likewiſe ſeparated ſo as to make two ſyllables. Accordingly, we find the Greek poets, and particularly Homer, frequently do ſo. And, it is evident, that it gives a great beauty and variety to their compoſition, as well as facility to their verſe. The Latins too, uſe it with reſpect to their diphthong *ai*, or *æ*, as it is commonly written; as when Lucretius ſays, PATRIAÏ *tempore iniquo*; and, Virgil, AURAÏ *ſimplicis ignem*; where we muſt allow, that the change of the word is not only commodious for the verſe, but agreeable to the ear, and ſuch as makes a pleaſant variation in the compoſition. In like manner, there are certain vowels in Greek, which, by the genius of the language, are contracted, that is, run together ſo as to make a ſound different from both, and ſometimes from either, not a ſound in which both are heard, as in the caſe of diphthongs. In this way the vowels *αω*, *εω*, *οω*, *αο*, *εο*, *οο*, are run together. Now, as in this way, the vowels are contracted, ſo they may be likewiſe divided; and accordingly we ſee they are frequently ſo divided in

Digitized by Google

Homer; which, beſides the beauty and variety it gives to his compoſition, aſſiſts him very much in making his verſe. Again, we have ſeen * that, in the formation of the Greek language, there was a progreſs (and, indeed, it was impoſſible that a work of ſuch art ſhould have been at once completed), and particularly in the formation of the tenſes of their verbs. Now, at the time that Homer wrote, it appears, that the old tenſes were not out of faſhion; ſo that he had the uſe of ſeveral forms of the ſame tenſe †. This gave him a liberty, as well

* Vol. ii. p. 516. & ſeqq.

† Thus, for example, he had for the infinitive three forms; for he uſes τυπτεμεναι, τυπτεμεν, or τυπτειν. All the paſt tenſes he uſes with or without the augment, except the preterperfect and pluperfect, which he always uſes with the reduplication, or temporal augment. But I have obſerved, that Herodotus ſometimes omits even theſe. Homer alſo adds the ſyllable θα to the ſecond perſons of his verbs, or φησθα and ἐιπησθα; and to the third perſon ſubjunctive, he adds the ſyllable σι, as in ελθησι, and λαβησι; and the ſame ſyllable he adds to his datives, as in θυρηφι and ὑλῃφι; and to the ſame caſe he adds ſometimes the ſyllable φι, as in βιηφι and οχεσφι. By theſe changes upon words, I think, Homer has ſufficiently varied and enriched his compoſition, without ſuppoſing, as ſome

as a variety in compoſition, which Virgil had not, in whoſe time very few of the old forms of verbs, that had been in uſe among the Romans, were preſerved. It is not, therefore, to be wondered, that Homer's verſe is ſo much richer, and more various than Virgil's, notwithſtanding all the pains which Virgil beſtowed upon his; greater, I believe, than ever poet beſtowed.

There is not, indeed, the ſame liberty uſed with words, nor is it fit there ſhould be, by the Greek proſe writers as by the poets; but there is a good deal, which has been obſerved by grammarians, and diſtinguiſhed by different names, ſuch as *Proſtheſis*, *Epentheſis*, *Paragoge*, and others, which are to be found in the common grammars. Theſe, in a language in which rhythm and

critics do, that his language is a mixture of the different dialects then ſpoken by the ſeveral tribes of Greeks. Such a mongrel dialect, I am perſuaded, was never written by any man; and the fact, I believe, was, that Homer wrote either the language that was ſpoken in the country where he was born and educated, or that was uſed by the poets that had written before him, and was the eſtabliſhed language of poetry.

Digitized by Google

numbers were ſo much ſtudied, are of great uſe, and therefore are much uſed by the Greek orators.

The modern languages admit few or no changes of this kind upon words; nor, indeed, is it poſſible that ſuch changes in them could be made by any rules of art. For, as they are not original languages, but have grown out of other languages, ſuch as the Gothic or Celtic, which are now obſolete, ſo that we do not know by what rules they were *formed*; we cannot therefore tell, as with reſpect to the Greek, by what rules they are to be *altered*. The modern compoſition therefore is, in this reſpect, as well as every other, much leſs various than the antient. In Engliſh, however, we make ſome few changes upon the ſound of our words, as in the preterite tenſes, and participles of our verbs; in place of *loved*, we ſay *lov'd*, a liberty which ought to be indulged to poets only, for the ſake of their verſe. For, by ſuch abridgements, we add greatly to the number of monoſyllables of our language, already too much crouded with them, beſides making the

Digitized by Google

ſound of our language ſtill more harſh, by joining together, in the ſame ſyllable, ſo many conſonants, which, without the eliſion of the vowel, would be ſeparated into two ſyllables, as when we ſay *condemn'd* inſtead of *condemned*. Milton, in his verſe, has uſed a much more judicious eliſion when he has run together two vowels, one ending the preceding word, and another beginning the ſubſequent, as in the following fine verſes, expreſſing ſo well by the ſound the idea they mean to convey:

> So he with difficulty' and labour hard,
> Moved on, with difficulty' and labour he.
> *Par. Loſt*, book 2. v. 1021.

In theſe, and many ſuch to be met with in this poem, Dr. Bentley, in his edition, has marked the eliſion by an apoſtrophe, as I have done; and he has obſerved, that in this Milton has choſen to follow the Latins, who only abſorbed the vowel in the pronunciation, rather than the Greeks, who ſtrike it out in writing.

Milton has, in other reſpects, uſed as much freedom with ſingle words as the genius of the language would permit, and

Digitized by Google

perhaps more. Thus, inſtead of *diſdain*, he has ſaid, *'ſdain*, cutting off the firſt ſyllable:

——Lifted up ſo high,
I 'ſdain'd ſubjection, and thought one ſtep higher
Would ſet me higheſt. *Par. Loſt*, book 4. v. 50.

By a like liberty, from the word *impregnate*, he has cut off the laſt ſyllable, and made it *impregn*:

——As Jupiter
On Juno ſmiles, when he impregns the clouds
That ſhed May flowers. Book 4. v. 500.

Whereas, according to the analogy of the language, it ſhould have been *impregnates*, as it is commonly uſed, being derived from the barbarous Latin verb *impregno* *; and ſometimes, inſtead of eliding letters and ſyllables, he has enlarged words, by adding ſyllables; as, for example, the corrupted word *hermit*, he has reſtored to its proper etymological orthography, and called it *eremite*, as in this line,

Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars.
Book 3. v. 574.

* See Du Cange's Gloſſary.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

Of proper words.—Diviſion of them into radical and derivative.—Another diviſion of them into ſuch as are of the original ſtock of the language, and ſuch as are foreign.—Thoſe of Latin extraction moſtly derived from corrupt Latinity.—The reſtoring them to their genuine ſignification a beauty of ſtyle.

I Come now to conſider ſingle words, not as ſound merely, but as having a meaning. In this view I have already conſidered them with reſpect to the grammatical art; according to which they are divided into what is called the parts of ſpeech, and have various accents belonging to them, which I have endeavoured to explain. But, with reſpect to ſtyle and compoſition, they are divided, as I have ſaid, into *proper* and *tropical*, or figurative, as they are commonly called. By *proper*, I mean ſuch as denote the things they ſtand for in their genuine and native ſignification, without any change

Digitized by Google

or inverſion of the natural ſenſe of the word *. By *tropical*, I mean ſuch as are applied to ſignify ſomething different from what they ſignify in their proper ſenſe, and which, therefore, they may be ſaid to ſignify by change only, or tranſlation from one thing to another.

Proper words are either *radical* words of the language, or they are *derivatives*; under which I comprehend not only derivatives, properly ſo called, but compounded and inflected words. As to radicals, though, in defining what a *proper* word is, I have uſed the terms *genuine* and *native*, it is only in oppoſition to the inverted, or unnatural ſignification of words, as it may be called; for there is nothing, either in nature or the grammatical art, that determines the proper ſignification of a radical word. It is fixed by uſe alone; and, as that is variable in all living languages, it frequently happens that words change their ſignification. When that happens, the ſpeaker, or

* They are called in Greek κύρια ὀνόματα, which is literally tranſlated by Horace, *dominantia nomina*. A. Poet. v. 234.

Digitized by Google

writer muſt ſubmit, and muſt uſe the word, if he have a mind to be intelligible, in the preſent ſenſe of it. For what Horace ſays of cuſtom is, in this reſpect, certainly true:

——*uſus,*
Quem penes, arbitrium, et jus, et norma loquendi.

It is, however, permitted to a poet to uſe a little freedom of this kind; and, accordingly, Milton has uſed many words in a ſenſe different from that which they denoted, I believe, even in his time. Thus the word *buxom*, in Engliſh, did antiently ſignify yielding, or obedient*; and therefore Milton has made it an epithet to the air †, tho', I am perſuaded, that in his days it had loſt that original ſignification, and was uſed to ſignify much the ſame thing that it now ſignifies, in which ſenſe it is uſed by Milton in other paſſages, as when he ſays of Euphroſyne, that ſhe is

So *buxom*, blyth, and debonair.

* See the word in Johnſon's Dictionary.

† Winnows the *buxom* air.

Digitized by Google

But, though proper words have no meaning but what cuſtom gives them, it is otherwiſe with reſpect to derivatives; for they have what may be truly called a proper and natural ſignification, being ſuch as is aſcertained by grammatical rules; and, as it depends upon the etymology, it may be called the etymological ſignification. When ſuch words loſe this ſignification, and denote ſomething elſe, not correſpondent to their etymology, it is an abuſe and corruption of language, but ſuch as is very common in modern languages; to which, if it be once firmly eſtabliſhed, we muſt ſubmit, as well as to other abuſes introduced by cuſtom. But, if the word has not deviated very far from its proper meaning, or if the uſe of it, in another ſenſe, is not fixed by conſtant and uniform cuſtom, I hold it to be a propriety and beauty of ſtyle to uſe it in its true etymological ſignification.

There is another diviſion of words in mixt languages, ſuch as ours, that deſerves, in this matter, to be attended to: It is into the native words of the language, ſuch as thoſe in Engliſh, which are derived from

Digitized by Google

the Saxon, the original ſtock of the language, and foreign words, that is, thoſe derived from other languages. In Engliſh, we have a great many words borrowed from the Latin, but a Latin much corrupted, in which the words were changed from their proper and claſſical ſignification. To reſtore them to that ſignification makes the ſtyle both proper and learned. Of this I ſhall give an example or two from our learned poet Milton. He deſcribes Eve as going forth with a *pomp* of winning graces attendant on her, *book* 8. v. 61. Here the word *pomp* is uſed, not as it is at preſent, to ſignify *ſhow* or *oſtentation*, but in its proper and etymological ſenſe, which is to denote *attendance* upon any one, either for honour or defence; or, as it is expreſſed by a French word, now uſed in Engliſh, *eſcorte**. Another example is, his uſe of the word *intend*, in that paſſage of Satan's

* Homer ſays, that Bellerophon went to Lycia,

θεων ὑπ' ἀμυμονι πομπῃ. *Il.* ξ. v. 171.

that is, attended or conducted by the Gods. And, in imitation of him, Herodotus, ſpeaking of the Perſian conſpirators that deſtroyed the *Magi*, ſays, that they went upon that enterpriſe θειᾳ πομπῃ χρεωμενοι; lib. 3. cap. ο ξ. This is the original and proper ſignification of

Digitized by Google

ſpeech in the ſecond book, where he deſires the devils, while he was away on the adventure which he had undertaken, to *intend* at home, while that ſhould be their home, what beſt might eaſe their preſent miſery; where the word *intend* is uſed in its proper ſignification of bent or application to any thing; and in this ſenſe the Latins ſay, *intendere animum*. Whereas, in corrupt Latinity, from which we have taken it, it ſignifies to deſign or project any thing*; and in this ſenſe we now uſe the word *intend*, our words of Latin extraction being formed, as I have obſerved, moſtly from ſuch Latinity.

the word, being derived from the verb πεμπω. From thence it came naturally to ſignify what we call a *proceſſion*, as *pompa funebris*, that is, the attendants upon a funeral, walking in ſuch order as to make a ſhow, and attract attention; and from thence again, by a corruption natural enough, it came to ſignify ſhow, or oſtentation of any kind. In this ſenſe it is uſed, even by the Roman claſſic writers; but Milton, who forms his ſtyle upon the Greek originals, and not upon the Latin imitations of them, has reſtored the word to its proper and etymological ſignification. To trace, in this way, the progreſs of words through their ſeveral ſtages, makes a kind of hiſtory of language, curious and entertaining enough.

* See Du Cange's Gloſſary.

Digitized by Google

I ſhall give another example from the ſame author. It is the uſe of the word *obſerve*, which, in our common language, is a word of no force and emphaſis; but, in good Latinity, it is a word of great ſignificancy; and, in this claſſical ſenſe, it is uſed by Milton in his firſt book, where, ſpeaking of the hoſt of fallen angels drawn up and reviewed by Satan, he ſays,

——Thus far theſe beyond
Compare of mortal proweſs, yet *obſerved*
Their dread commander. v. 587.

where it denotes, as in Latin, *obſerved with particular attention*; or, as it is expreſſed by one native Engliſh word, *marked*.

The laſt example I ſhall give, is likewiſe from the ſame author, where, ſpeaking of Helen, he calls her *Jove-born Helena*, in thoſe beautiful lines in his Comus, where he makes the enchanter ſay to the lady, when he recommends his cup to her,

Not that Nepenthe, which the wife of Thon,
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Was of ſuch power to ſtir up joy as this,
To life ſo friendly, or ſo cool to thirſt.

Digitized by Google

Here the Engliſh word *born*, which anſwers to the Latin word *natus*, he has uſed in the claſſical ſenſe of *natus*; for the Romans ſaid, *natus ex patre*, as well as *ex matre*; whereas, in common Engliſh, we ſay only, *born of the mother*.

In this way, I find Dr. Middleton, the author of the life of Cicero, has uſed a great many words, which gives a peculiar propriety and elegance to his ſtyle; and, I think, for that reaſon, as well as others, he may be reckoned among the moſt claſſical writers that we have had of late*.

* I will give ſome few examples from this author, among many that might be given. *Diſcipline*, in the common acceptation of the word, ſignifies the exaction of any thing with ſeverity, and under the terror of puniſhment, and ſometimes the puniſhment itſelf; but, in genuine Latinity, it ſignifies that ſtudy or exerciſe by which any thing is to be learnt; and, by an eaſy tranſlation from this its proper and etymological ſignification, it is made to denote *what* is ſo learned; and, in general, any ſyſtem of doctrines and inſtitutions that have ariſen from teaching and practice. In the firſt of theſe ſenſes it is uſed by Dr. Middleton, where he ſays, 'Cicero had now 'run through all that courſe of *diſcipline*, which he lays 'down as neceſſary to form the complete orator;' Life of Cicero, vol. 3. p. 36. edit. 3. And, in the other

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

Of Tropes, and different kinds of them, particularly of Metaphors.——Metaphors uſed from neceſſity, as well as for ornament.—Obſervations on the uſe of Metaphors.

THE next kind of words of which I am to treat, according to the method I have laid down, is tropical or figurative

ſenſe, it is frequently uſed by the Doctor, as in thoſe paſſages where he ſpeaks of the *diſcipline* of the ſtate. In this laſt ſenſe, the word is of common uſe when applied to military inſtitutions; as when we ſay the *diſcipline* of the army.——The word *oppreſs*, in Engliſh, is commonly applied only to *perſons*; but, according to the claſſical uſe, it is equally applicable to *things*. Thus they ſay in Latin, *Cæſar patriæ libertatem oppreſſit*, which the Doctor has tranſlated when he has ſaid, that 'Cæſar formed 'a deſign of *oppreſſing* the liberty of his country,' vol. 1. p. 34. Again, the word, in its common uſe in Engliſh, ſignifies only to preſs too hard, ſo as to hurt; but, in genuine Latinity, it ſignifies to preſs a thing ſo as to cruſh or deſtroy it altogether, the prepoſition *ob* having an intenſive force in compoſition. Accordingly, when a man is killed by a houſe falling upon him, they ſay, *ruina*

Digitized by Google

words. Thoſe which were the ſubject of the preceeding chapter are what Horace calls *inornata nomina et verba**, and make no more than plain ſpeech; whereas theſe I am to ſpeak of in this chapter make fine or ornamental language, and are treated of by all the writers upon rhetoric and poetry, to which they are thought chiefly to belong.

A trope, as I have already defined it, is a change of a word from its native and genuine ſignification to another that is different. This change is grounded upon ſome

ædium oppreſſus eſt; and in this ſenſe Doctor Middleton has commonly uſed the word.—In like manner, the word *reconcile*, in Engliſh, is applied only to friends, not to friendſhips; but, in Latin, they ſay *reconciliare amicitiam*, as well as *amicos*. The Doctor, therefore, has ſaid, that 'a *friendſhip* cannot be ſaid to be *reconciled*, which was never interruped;' *Ib. p.* 248. In the ſame claſſical ſenſe, he has uſed the words *perpetual*, *innocence*, *abſtinence*, *piety*, &c. And, upon the whole, I think that, both for the choice of words, and the compoſition of them, the Doctor is to be numbered among the chief of the few claſſical writers of this age, though I know that his ſtyle has ſo much of the antient *ſimplicity*, and ſo little of the modern *brilliancy* (that I may uſe an Anglified French word, to expreſs what we have chiefly learned from the French), as not to pleaſe the many.

* A. Poet. v. 234.

Digitized by Google

connection or relation betwixt the things signified by the two words; and the connection must be such as is well known, otherwise it will be an ænigma, or riddle, not a trope.

As the connections and relations of things are various, so also there are various kinds of tropes; for things are connected as genus and species, or as both specieses of the same genus. There is, therefore, a trope from the genus to the species, and *vice versa*, and from one species to another *. Things

* Tropes of this kind are comprehended under the general name of *synecdoche*. The transference is from the genus to the species, when Homer, instead of saying that a ship was moored, says, that she was fixed, or made to stand, νηυς δε μοι ἠδ ἑστηκε; for *mooring* is a species of the general idea of *fixing*: It is a very common figure, and easily understood by the thing to which it is applied, as in this instance to a ship; See *Arist. Poet. c.* 21. From the species to the genus, as when Homer says, μαρμορῳ ὀκρυοεντι βαλων; where marble, which is one species of stone, is put for the genus. From species to species, as when the same poet uses the word ταμειν for ἐρυσαι; and again, ἐρυσαι for ταμειν; as where he says, χαλκῳ ἀπο ψυχην ἐρυσας, and ταμνεν ατηρει χαλκῳ; because both, says Aristotle, denote to *take away* something; *ib.* So that they are both specieses of the same genus, viz. *taking away*.

Digitized by Google

alſo are connected as whole and part; and hence ariſe two other kinds of tropes, one from the whole to the part, the other from the part to the whole*. Further, things have various accidents attending them; and, by theſe accidents, the things are denoted †. Again, there are circumſtances which precede things, or are ſubſequent to them; and, from theſe alſo the things are denominated ‡. Again,

* From the whole to the part, as when Homer ſays, οἱ δ' ἐπεὶ ἀλλήλους ἀραρον τυκτῇσι βοεσσῖ; *Il.* 12. *v.* 105. where the *whole ox* is put for his *hide*, of which the ſhields were made. Again, from the part to the whole, when the ſame poet ſays, τοιην δ' αὖ κεφαλην ποθεων, where the head is put for the whole man. Of the ſame kind is the common epithet he gives the Greeks, of ἐυκνημιδες, which, from a ſingle part of armour, denotes the whole. Both theſe tropes are likewiſe ranked under *ſynecdoche*.

† Thus Homer ſays of rowers, ἑζομενοι λευκαινον ὑδωρ; and of people travelling in chariots, he ſays, οἱ δε παντημεριοι σειον ζυγον; where, from the accident of *whitening the water*, *rowing* is denoted; and, from the *ſhaking of the yoke*, driving in a carriage. This trope is likewiſe called *ſynecdoche*, and is much uſed by the poets, becauſe it paints the object, and, as it were, ſets it before our eyes.

‡ From what precedes, as when Homer ſays, λυσε δε παρθενικην ζωνην, where the deflowering of a virgin is expreſſed by the preceding circumſtance, of looſening the

Digitized by Google

a man is connected with his father, with his country, or with any quality in him that is remarkable and diſtinguiſhing; and hence three kinds of tropes *. Another trope is, when a thing is denominated from another thing, or perſon, to which it refers †.

All theſe, and ſeveral more, are explained at large in treatiſes that have been written on rhetoric and poetry; but I do not know that they are any where better explained, and illuſtrated by examples from

virgin zone, or girdle. Again, the trope is from what follows to what goes before, as when he uſes the word ἐναρίζειν, which ſignifies, *to ſpoil a dead man of his arms*, inſtead of φονεύειν, to *kill him*; becauſe the one, in thoſe days, followed the other. This alſo is a ſpecies of the ſynecdoche, and is much uſed by poets.

* Thus we ſay *Pelides* for *Achilles*; the *Macedonian* or the *Stagirite*, for *Alexander* or for *Ariſtotle*; the *Orator* for *Demoſthenes*; and the *Poet* for *Homer*. This trope is called *Antonomaſia*.

† As when we ſay *Ceres* inſtead of *bread*; *Bacchus* inſtead of *wine*; *Vulcan* inſtead of *fire*. It is called Metonymy, a very general name, and which may be applied to all tropes.

Digitized by Google

Homer, than in the life of Homer, written, as ſome think, by Dionyſius the Halicarnaſſian, and publiſhed by Gale among the *Opuſcula Mythologica*.

There is a trope, commonly ſo called, which I mention, becauſe it is truly no trope, unleſs by the uſe of another trope called *abuſe*. The trope I mean is *Onomatopœia*; by which the word is not changed in its ſignification, but created. Of this kind many inſtances are given from Homer, of words, which, it is ſaid, he formed from the ſound of the things expreſſed by them*. Whether he formed them or not, I hold to be very doubtful; and I rather incline to be of opinion that many of them, mentioned by the commentators, were original words in the language. For it is certain that there are many ſuch in every language, at leaſt

* The author, above quoted, of the life of Homer mentions the words δυπος, ἀραβος, βομβος, and the verbs ἐοχθει and ἀναβρυχει. But why ſhould Homer have created theſe words, any more than other words he mentions, ſuch as φυσαν, *inflare*; πριζειν, *ſtridere*; μυκασθαι, *mugire*; βρυχαι, *tumere*; which he acknowledges were names impoſed upon the things by the firſt formers of the language.

Digitized by Google

every language of art, and particularly in Engliſh, as, for example, the words *roar*, *crack*, *grunt*, *gurgle*, &c. which certainly are not the creation of any particular author, but as old as the language.

I ſhall conclude what I have to ſay of tropes by ſome obſervations on the metaphor, the moſt common of all tropes, being uſed in common converſation, and often from neceſſity, as well as for ornament. The word, in its proper and etymological ſignification, will apply to every kind of trope; for it denotes a change or transference, and accordingly it is rendered into Latin by the word *tranſlatio* *. And it is defined by Ariſtotle in ſuch a manner as to comprehend ſeveral of the tropes that I have before mentioned†; but, according to the common

* See Cicero *de Oratore*, *lib.* 3. *c.* 38. where he calls every figurative, or tropical word, *verbum tranſlatum*; and ſpeaks of the *modus transferendi verbi*, as applicable to every way of uſing a word, except in its proper ſignification.

† Μεταφορα δε ἐστιν ὀνοματος αλλοτριου ἐπιφορα, ἡ απο γενους επι ειδος, ἡ απο ειδους ἐπι γενος, ἡ ἀπο ειδους ἐπι ειδος, ἡ κατα τὸ ἀναλογον; *cap.* 21, *Poet.* This definition comprehends

uſe of the word, it is that kind of trope which is taken from the reſemblance, ſimilitude, or analogy, that one thing has to another *. It may be called the *witty* trope; for it is in it that wit chiefly conſiſts; and it is, as Ariſtotle has obſerved, the ſign of good natural parts. For it ſhews a comprehenſive mind, that can collect together

ſeveral ſpecieſes of the ſynecdoche above-mentioned; but it is only the laſt part of it, viz. κατα το αναλογον, which makes what is commonly called a *metaphor*, in contradiſtinction to other tropes.

* It is thus defined by the author above-mentioned of the life of Homer, Μεταφορα ἐστιν απο τῦ κυριως δηλουμενυ πραγματος ἐφ ἑτερον μετενηνεγμενη, μετα της αμφοιν αναλογυ ὁμοιοτητος. This definition perfectly coincides with the laſt part of the definition from Ariſtotle, mentioned in the preceding note; and the examples he gives of it agree perfectly with thoſe given by Ariſtotle. For example, he ſays that Homer calls the top of a mountain the head; for, ſays he, what the head is to a man, the ſame the top of a mountain is to the mountain, ὁν γαρ λογον ἐχει κορυφη προς ανθρωπον, τουτον και ἡ ακρωρεια προς το ορος. And of the ſame kind is the inſtance given by Ariſtotle of the expreſſion of the evening of life for old age; for, ſays he, what the evening is to the day, old age is to life; *cap.* 21.

Digitized by Google

different things under one reſemblance or likeneſs *.

I have ſaid, that it is the trope moſt uſed in converſation; therefore Ariſtotle ſays, that it is the fitteſt for Iambics, that is, the verſe of dramatic poetry; becauſe that poetry is the imitation of diſcourſe or converſation †. And, accordingly, the ſtyle of the Greek tragedy is very metaphorical.

I have alſo obſerved, that we often uſe metaphorical words, not by way of ornament, but for want of proper terms; as when we ſay the FOOT *of a hill*, or of a *chair*, or a *table*, with many like expreſſions ‡. And there is a ſet of words, I believe, in all languages, which are metapho-

* ἐυφϋΐας ἐστι σημειον, το γαρ ευ μεταφερειν, τὸ ὁμοιον θεωρειν ἐστι; *cap.* 22.

† *Poet. cap.* 22.

‡ This is obſerved by Cicero, 'Tertius ille modus 'transferendi verbi late patet, quem neceſſitas genuit, 'inopia coacta, et auguſtiis; poſt autem delectatio ju-'cunditaſque celebravit. Nam, ut veſtis frigoris depel-'lendi cauſa reperta primo, poſt adhiberi cœpta eſt ad 'ornatum etiam corporis, et dignitatem; ſic verbi

Digitized by Google

rical, but, for want of other words, are conſtantly uſed as proper, ſo that the metaphor is entirely overlooked. The words I mean are thoſe expreſſing the operations of mind, which are commonly tranſlations from bodily operations. Such are the words *reflect*, *ponder*, *ruminate*, and the like.

It is, I believe, for this reaſon that barbarous languages are obſerved to be figura-

' tranſlatio inſtituta eſt inopiæ cauſa, frequentata delectationis;' *De Oratore*, *lib.* 3. *cap.* 38. And he proceeds to give very proper examples from his own language of this figure being uſed from neceſſity: *Nam gemmare, vitis, luxuriem eſſe in herbis, lætas ſegetes*, etiam ruſtici dicunt; *ib.* Here we may obſerve, that it is no impeachment of the ſimplicity of Virgil's exordium of the Georgics, that he has uſed the expreſſion *lætas segetes*, which, it ſeems, was commonly uſed by the farmers. Nor is his denoting the time of plowing by the ſtars to be conſidered as figurative, ſince the farmers in thoſe days regulated their plowings and ſowings by the riſing and ſetting of certain ſtars, as we do by the days of our calendar months. The expreſſion, therefore, among us, would be highly figurative, ſo as not to be intelligible, except to the learned reader; whereas, among the Romans, it was a ſimple and common phraſe. This ſhews the neceſſity of underſtanding exactly both the language of a people, and their cuſtoms and manners, in order to be able to judge certainly of the ſtyle of their authors.

Digitized by Google

tive, which by many is thought to be a ſign of their richneſs; whereas I hold it to be a proof of their poverty. For, not being able to expreſs a thing by its proper name, they are naturally driven to tell what it is like. The moſt perfect language is, therefore, that which has proper names for every thing, and uſes figurative words only by way of ornament.

Another obſervation proper to be made is, that we cannot underſtand perfectly a metaphorical expreſſion, unleſs we know the proper meaning of the word; for we cannot tell whether two things be like or not, if we do not know them both. Whoever, therefore, borrows a metaphor from a thing that he does not underſtand, will be apt to apply it very improperly. And, as the whole beauty and elegance of the tropical or figurative ſtyle depends upon this knowledge, every dictionary, or other book explaining words, ſhould diſtinguiſh accurately betwixt the proper and figurative meaning of a word; and, beginning with the proper, ſhould from thence deduce the me-

Digitized by Google

taphorical uſe. And I will take it upon me to ſay, that a dictionary, which only gives you different ſignifications, without diſtinguiſhing what is proper from what is figurative, is imperfect in its kind. The moſt perfect dictionary, in this reſpect, I have ever ſeen, is that which the French Academy have given of their language, where there is another diſtinction made of words, which, I think, is alſo proper, between thoſe that are of low and vulgar uſe, and thoſe that are proper for the high or grave ſtyle. And, upon the whole, I think it is, in every reſpect, a moſt complete dictionary, ſuch as does much honour to that learned body.

Another obſervation I ſhall make is, that it is a great fault in ſtyle when the metaphors are too much crouded; for, if they are not clear, it becomes a riddle; or, tho' they be, the compoſition is diſagreeable, becauſe it is the affectation of wit; and ſuch a ſtyle puts me in mind of a kind of game that I remember to have played at, called *what is it like?* This exceſs is avoided by all the great writers of antiquity; and if, at any time, any of them fall into it,

Digitized by Google

they do not eſcape the cenſure of the critic: And Plato particularly is, on that account, found fault with by the Halicarnaſſian. But there was one kind of compoſition among them, which was profeſſedly figurative to ſuch a degree, as to be almoſt ænigmatical. This was the chorus of the antient tragedy, of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſay more afterwards.

My laſt obſervation upon this trope is, that, as it requires, according to Ariſtotle's obſervation, genius and fancy; ſo it requires alſo a great deal of knowledge of different arts and ſciences, and likewiſe of the common affairs of life, if we have a mind to adorn our ſtyle much in this way. For theſe are the materials of which metaphors are made; and, beſides thoſe requiſites, there muſt be a correct taſte, by which we are taught to know what is proper and becoming, and ſuitable to the genius of our work. This is only to be acquired by the ſtudy of rules, and by the forming our ſtyle upon the beſt models. And, in general, there are three things abſolutely neceſſary for fine writing. *Firſt*, Natural ge-

Digitized by Google

nius, without which nothing truly excellent can be performed in any art. *Secondly*, Various knowledge, which furniſhes the materials to work upon. And, *thirdly*, The knowledge of the rules of the art. Thoſe, therefore, who think that genius alone is ſufficient to make a fine writer, or good artiſt of any kind, have but a very imperfect knowledge of the extent of the art, or rather do not know that it is at all an art, or, being an art, that it requires materials to work upon.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.

Of the ſecond part of ſtyle, viz. Compoſition. —This conſidered, firſt, with reſpect to ſound.—That diverſified in the learned languages by muſical tones and rhythms, which we have not.—The ſound, therefore, in our compoſition, can only be varied by the order of the words, and by periods.—Each of theſe conſidered, and illuſtrated by examples.

I Come now to ſpeak of the ſecond part of ſtyle, viz. compoſition, of ſo much greater power and influence than ſingle words, that the whole, as I have obſerved, is not improperly denominated from it. For, by different compoſition, we make different ſtyle of the ſame words; and, in the ſame ſtyle, it gives a variety, which it is impoſſible any choice of words can give. Now, in all arts, and in the art of compoſition, no leſs than in any other, there can be no pleaſure or true beauty, without variety. For, though the compoſition were in itſelf ever

Digitized by Google

ſo perfect; yet, if it be not agreeably varied, it will ſoon diſguſt and offend. Dionyſius the Halicarnaſſian has written a treatiſe of compoſition, very often quoted in the courſe of this work, in which, though he has only treated of one third part of it according to my diviſion, viz. the ſound*; yet, even this he makes of ſuch importance, that he compares it to the rod of Minerva in Homer, which could transform a beggar into a king, or hero, or *vice verſa*. In like manner, ſays he, of common, or even mean words, a certain compoſition will make fine poetry or proſe; and, contrariwiſe, bad compoſition will diſgrace the beſt words; and he gives examples of both †.

* The name in Greek for this part of compoſition is, συνθεσις; and therefore the work of Dionyſius is entitled περὶ ὀνομάτων συνθέσεως. This we muſt diſtinguiſh from the grammatical conſtruction of words, called in Greek συνταξις, from whence our Engliſh word *ſyntax*. The name the Greeks gave to what we call ſtyle or compoſition is λεξις, which, by its etymology, ſhews that the Greeks thought *ſpeaking* the principal work of compoſition.

† See περὶ συνθέσεως, § 4. and what is ſaid upon this ſubject in the beginning of my third diſſertation, annexed to vol. 2.

Digitized by Google

It is this part of compoſition that I am now to treat of; for the reader will remember, that I have ſaid compoſition was varied in three ways; by ſound, by figures of conſtruction, and, *laſtly*, by figures of the ſenſe.

As to the ſound, or material part of language, as I call it, I have treated of it very fully in the preceeding volume. I there divided it into three parts, articulation, accent, and rhythm, and endeavoured to ſhew the effects of all the three in compoſition. The articulation of our modern languages, according to the account there given of it, is rude and barbarous, compared with that of the learned languages; neither is it ſoftened by the muſic which belonged to thoſe languages, conſiſting of their accents, which were muſical tones, and their rhythms, which were compoſitions of long and ſhort ſyllables, and made what may be called the *time* of their ſpeech. We cannot, therefore, have any thing in our language like the numbers or melody of the Greek and Latin; ſo that we want what the Halicarnaſſian reckoned ſo great a beauty in the Greek compoſi-

Digitized by Google

tion; and there remain to us only two things, by which our ſtyle can be varied, and made agreeable to the ear, viz. the order or arrangement of the words; and, *ſecondly*, compoſition in periods of different lengths, and conſiſting of more or fewer members, likewiſe of different lengths*.

As to the order of the words, I have ſhewn, in the preceeding volume, book 3. c. 10. &c. how much the antients excelled us likewiſe in that. It was by the liberty of arrangement, which the genius of their language allowed, that they produced thoſe

* Cicero, in his *Orator ad M. Brutum*, c. 44. mentions three things relative to the ſound of compoſition. His words are, 'collocabuntur igitur verba, aut ut inter 'ſe quàm aptiſſime cohaereant extrema cum primis, eaque 'fint quam ſuaviſſimis vocibus; aut ut forma ipſa concinnitaſque verborum conficiat orbem ſuum; aut ut comprehenſio numeroſe et apte cadat.' The *firſt* is, what I call the order or arrangement of the words; the *ſecond* is the period; the *third* is the numbers or rhythms. And as to the accents, which made the melody of the Greek language, it ſeems Cicero did not think them of ſuch conſequence in the Latin compoſition as to mention them. The two firſt beauties of compoſition we may have, as I have ſaid, in our language; the other two we cannot have.

Digitized by Google

numbers, which were thought ſo eſſential to all fine compoſition, and particularly to the oratorial. And I have further ſhewn, that this liberty of arrangement, as uſed by the great authors of antiquity, did not only not impair or obſcure the ſenſe, but inforced it *. However, though we cannot, even in this ſingle article of arrangement, come up to the beauty of antient compoſition, we may do a great deal by it, more than is commonly believed.

And, in the firſt place, by mixing our words properly, joining thoſe of harſh ſound with thoſe of better, and polyſyllables, where we can find them, with monoſyllables, we may ſoften, in ſome degree, the native rudeneſs of our northern dialect; and I am not ſure but that ſomething may be made of the variety of our accents, ſuch as they are, even in our proſe compoſition. I have ſhewn that our verſe is made by them; and, if ſo, I do not ſee why our proſe compoſition may not be agreeably diverſified, by a judicious mixture of accented and unaccented, or, to ſpeak more pro-

* Differt. 3. annexed to vol. 2. p. 572. *& ſeq.*

Digitized by Google

perly, loud and ſoft ſyllables; (for the reader muſt always remember, that I do not uſe accent, in the claſſical ſenſe of the word, to denote a variation of tone upon the ſyllable;) but we muſt take care not to make verſe of it, nor bring it even near to verſe. This is as great a fault in our compoſition as it was reckoned in the antient; for our accents, like their quantities, muſt be ſo mixt in the compoſition, and ſo little aſtricted to rule, that, though the effect of them be felt even by the vulgar, they are not perceived, except by the critic. I muſt therefore take upon me to condemn all that has been written of late in the rhapſody ſtyle, or meaſured proſe, as it is called by ſome, where the numbers are ſo apparent, that they are perceived by every body. It is a ſtyle hobbling between verſe and proſe, of which I do not approve; at the ſame time, I cannot help thinking, but that thoſe accents which make our verſe would have ſome effect upon our proſe, if properly uſed, though I do not know that it has been attended to by any body.

But, ſetting aſide all conſideration of the accents, the arrangement of the words is

Digitized by Google

what gives a turn to a ſentence, that is either pleaſing to the ear, or uncouth and diſagreeable. That this is the caſe in high compoſition, muſt be evident to any one who will take the trouble to put the words out of the order in which the author has placed them, and take down the ſentence in the manner I have taken down that fine period of Milton, in the beginning of the ſecond book of Paradiſe Loſt *; by which not only the pleaſure of the ear is loſt, but the ſenſe and ſpirit of the compoſition flattened and enervated. I will give another example from the proſe writings of the ſame author: It is the period with which he begins his *Eiconoclaſtes*, or anſwer to King Charles's Εικων βασιλικη. It runs thus:—'To 'deſcant on the misfortunes of a perſon 'fallen from ſo high a dignity, who hath 'alſo paid his final debt both to nature and 'his faults, is neither of itſelf a thing com-'mendable, nor the intention of this diſ-'courſe †.' Now, let the order of the words

* See vol. 2. p. 358.

† I will here add the ſequel of this paſſage:—'Neither was it fond ambition, or the vanity to get a 'name, preſent, or with poſterity, by writing againſt a 'king. I never was ſo thirſty after fame, nor ſo deſti-'tute of other hopes and means, better and more cer-

Digitized by Google

be altered in this manner: 'It is not in it-
'self a thing commendable, nor is it the
'intention of this diſcourſe, to deſcant on the
'misfortunes of a perſon fallen from ſo

'tain to attain it; for kings have gained glorious titles
'from their favourers by writing againſt private men,
'as Henry VIII. did againſt Luther: But no man ever
'gained much honour by writing againſt a king, as
'not uſually meeting with that force of argument in
'ſuch courtly antagoniſts, which to convince might
'add to his reputation. Kings moſt commonly, tho'
'ſtrong in legions, are but weak at arguments; as they
'who ever have been accuſtomed, from the cradle, to uſe their
'will only as their right hand, their reaſon only as their
'left; whence, unexpectedly conſtrained to that kind
'of combat, they prove but weak and puny adverſaries.
'Nevertheleſs, for their ſakes, who, through cuſtom,
'ſimplicity, or want of better teaching, have not more
'ſeriouſly conſidered kings, than in the gaudy name of
'majeſty, and admire them and their doings, as if they
'breathed not the ſame breath with other mortal men,
'I ſhall make no ſcruple to take up (for it ſeems to be
'the challenge both of him and all his party) this gaunt-
'let, though a king's, in the behalf of liberty and the
'commonwealth.'

This, I think, is a ſpecimen of noble and manly eloquence. For, not to mention the weight of matter that it contains, and the high republican ſpirit which animates it, I aſk thoſe gentlemen, who deſpiſe the Greek and Roman learning, and admire only the French authors, or ſome later Engliſh writers, that they are pleaſed to ſet up as models (for Milton, I know, they think uncouth, harſh, and pedantic), whether they can produce

Digitized by Google

'high a dignity, who hath alſo paid his 'final debt both to nature and his faults.' Here the words are not only the ſame, but the order likewiſe is preſerved, except that the firſt and laſt members of the ſentence have changed their places. The period alſo is preſerved; and yet what a change there is in the compoſition! How flat, inſipid, and, as it were, ſupine it becomes, inſtead of flowing, rounded, and ſpirited! If we were to change the order further, it would become harſh and uncouth, as well as flat and ſpiritleſs. Suppoſe, for example, we were to give it this turn: 'It is not in 'itſelf a commendable thing, nor is it of 'this diſcourſe the intention, the misfortunes 'to deſcant on of a perſon from ſo high a 'dignity fallen, who to nature and his 'faults hath alſo paid his final debt.' This is Engliſh, and ſufficiently intelligible; but it is a compoſition that will offend every

any thing themſelves, or find any thing in their favourite authors, which they can ſet againſt this paſſage in Milton, either for the choice of the words, or the beauty and variety of the compoſition? It may be conſidered as a *gauntlet* that Milton, for the honour of antient literature, has thrown down to thoſe gentlemen, which he muſt be a bold man among them who will venture to take up.

Digitized by Google

body *. Yet we have ſeen, in our time, a whole work in a taſte of compoſition very little better; I mean Gordon's tranſlation of Tacitus, a work which had once a high

* Cicero, in his *Orator ad M. Brutum*, has given us examples, from orations of his time, and in his language, to ſhew how much the fineſt compoſition may be ſpoiled by a ſlight change of the order of the words. The paſſage is long; but it is ſo much to our preſent purpoſe, that I will here inſert it:—" Quantum autem ſit apte dicere, experiri licet, ſi aut compoſiti oratoris bene ſtructam collocationem diſſolvas permutatione verborum. Corrumpatur enim tota res, ut et hæc noſtra in Corneliana, et deinceps omnia, *Neque me divitiæ movent, quibus omneis Afriçanos et Lælios multi venalitii mercatoreſque ſuperârunt.* Immuta paulum, ut ſit, *multi ſuperârunt mercatores venalitiique*, perierit tota res: Et quæ ſequuntur, *Neque veſtis, aut cælatum aurum, et argentum, quo noſtros veteres Marcellos Maximoſque multi enuchi è Syria Ægyptoque vicerunt.* Verba permuta ſic, ut ſit, *Vicerunt eunuchi è Syria Ægyptoque.* Adde tertium, *Neque vero ornamenta iſta villarum, quibus Paullum & L. Mummium, qui rebus his urbem, Italiamque omnem, referſerunt, ab aliquo video perfacile Deliaco aut Syro potuiſſe ſuperari.* Fac ite, *potuiſſe ſuperari ab aliquo Syro aut Deliaco:* Videſne ut, ordine verborum paulum commutato, iiſdem verbis, ſtante ſententia, ad nihilum omnia recidant; cum ſint ex aptis diſſoluta? Aut ſi alicujus inconditi arripias diſſipatam aliquam ſententiam, eamque, ordine verborum paullum commutato, in quadrum redigas, efficiatur aptum illud, quod fuerit antea diffluens, ac ſolutum, Age, ſumme de Gracchi apud Cenſores illud, *Abeſſe non poteſt, quin ejuſ-*

Digitized by Google

reputation, but, I think, is now admired by no body. This tranſlator wanted to imitate the manner of his author, by making him ſpeak Engliſh ſo uncouth; but it is plain that he did not know the peculiarities of Tacitus's ſtyle, which are—a ſhort disjointed compoſition, ſuch as that of Seneca, which Caligula, wittily enough, compared to ſand without lime *; an affectation of brevity, and of expreſſing common things in an uncommon way; and, *laſtly*, a certain point and turn, very different from the noble ſimplicity of the great writers of antiquity. But his ſtyle, as far as concerns the arrangement, is claſſical enough; whereas, a ſtrange uncouth order of the words is the diſtinguiſhing mark of his tranſlator's ſtyle.

And not only is the high ſtyle disfigured by an improper arrangement, but common diſcourſe. For if, inſtead of ſaying, *give*

dem hominis ſit probos improbare, qui improbos probet. Quanto aptius, ſi ita dixiſſet, *Quin ejuſdem hominis ſit, qui improbos probet, probos improbare?* Hoc mode dicere nemo unquam noluit; nemoque potuit, quin dixerit; qui autem aliter dixerunt, hoc aſſequi non potuerunt; *cap.* 70.

* Suet. in *Calig.*

Digitized by Google

me bread, I ſay, *bread give me;* or if, inſtead of *give me ſmall beer*, I ſay, *ſmall beer*, or, *beer ſmall*, *give me*, ſuch an order of words makes the compoſition of ill ſound, affected, and ridiculous.

Such an arrangement is undoubtedly bad. But what is the right arrangement in Engliſh? For this it would not be eaſy to give particular rules; nor, indeed, would it be worth the while to attempt it, as a good natural taſte, without which nothing good can be done in any art, and the ſtudy of the beſt authors, will ſufficiently direct us. But ſome general rules may be given. And, *firſt*, our arrangement muſt be ſuch as the nature of the language will admit, without obſcurity or ambiguity; for we cannot pretend to that liberty of arrangement which the Greek and Latin authors uſe. *Secondly*, We muſt have regard not only to the grammar of the language, but to cuſtom; for we will not endure, in favour of any author, to have our ears violated by a compoſition altogether ſtrange and unuſual. But cuſtom allows a conſiderable latitude in Engliſh, much more than in French, and more

Digitized by Google

in poetry than in proſe, that being one way in which our poetic ſtyle is not improperly diſtinguiſhed from proſe compoſition. Further, it muſt be as agreeable to the ear as it can be made of ſuch rough materials as we have to work upon. *Laſtly*, and what is principal, it ſhould be ſuch as to convey the meaning as clearly and forcibly as poſſible.

The ſecond thing I mentioned, by which we can vary the ſound of our compoſition in Engliſh, is, by making periods. A period may be defined to be a certain comprehenſion and circumſcription of words, in which the ear perceives number and meaſure, and a certain roundneſs and compactneſs, ſo as to appear to have nothing redundant, or nothing wanting *. As every thing

* Cicero has not defined a period, but has tranſlated the word into Latin by many ſynonymous terms. He calls it 'circuitus ille orationis, quem Græci περιοδον, nos 'tum ambitum, tum circuitum, tum comprehenſionem, 'aut continuationem, aut circumſcriptionem, dicimus;' *Orator ad M. Brutum*, c. 61.

The deſcription I have given is a paraphraſe of Ariſtotle's definition of it, which is in the following words: λεγω δε περιοδον, λεξιν ἐχουσαν ἀρχην και τελευτην, αυτην καθ' αυτην, και μεγεθος ευσυνοπτον; *a period is a compoſition of words,*

Digitized by Google

is beſt illuſtrated by its contrary, I would adviſe a man, who deſires to know exactly what a period is, to ſtudy the author I mentioned above, I mean Tacitus. For there, inſtead of roundneſs and compactneſs, leaving nothing to be deſiderated, he will find ſhort ſentences, with abrupt cadences, which cheat the ear; then let him compare either this harſhneſs of Tacitus, or the ſand without lime of Seneca, with the flowing compoſition of a Cicero or Demoſthenes, and he will underſtand the definition I have gi-

having a beginning and end in itſelf, and an extent ſuch as can be comprehended in one view; *Rhetoric. lib.* 3. *c.* 9. The oppoſite to a period is what he calls Λεξις εἰρομενη, which has neither beginning nor end in itſelf, but is only terminated by the ſenſe. In this kind of compoſition, the words are ſo put together, as that the ear expects no concluſion; and, conſequently, is ſurpriſed when the concluſion comes; whereas, in a period, the ear foreſees, as it were, the end, and is not cheated by its coming, either too ſoon, or too late. This gives the mind a certain perception of number, meaſure, and aptneſs of parts, which pleaſes very much.—The whole chapter is well worth reading, as it ſhews very plainly the difference betwixt a philoſopher who knows, and can explain the reaſons of things, and an orator, who knows indeed the practice of the art, but, not being able to define or explain like a philoſopher, contents himſelf with giving us many words for the ſame thing.

Digitized by Google

ven. Or, if my reader is not learned, let him have recourſe to Milton, and ſtudy the ſpeeches in the *Paradiſe Loſt*, particularly thoſe in the ſecond book; there he will find that fine period, in the beginning of Satan's firſt ſpeech, which I have elſewhere quoted and commented upon*. And there is another in the beginning of Belial's ſpeech in the ſame book, alſo worthy of his attention. It runs thus:

> I ſhould be much for open war, O peers!
> As not behind in hate, if what was urged,
> Main reaſon to perſuade immediate war,
> Did not diſſuade me moſt.

And, if he further wants an example of a good period in proſe, I think the one I have given above, from Milton's Eiconoclaſtes, may ſuffice. And if he would deſire to have here likewiſe a contraſt, he may go to ſome of the faſhionable productions of this age, where he will find a ſhort, ſmart cut of ſtyle, imitated from Tacitus; or, if the imitator is not learned enough to underſtand him, from ſome late French writers, very different from the compoſition of Milton, and other good writers in Engliſh.

* Vol. 2. p. 356.

Digitized by Google

Periods are commonly divided into members, which, if properly done, adds greatly to their beauty, because it makes the variety greater. For every combination, if the parts are proper, and properly put together, is more beautiful than any simple thing. A long period, therefore, consisting of several members, if it be not immoderately long, so as not to be easily spoken in one breath; and if the members are aptly joined, and have each in itself a certain roundness and compactness; and, *lastly*, if the sense be clear, and more forcibly conveyed than it would be in detached sentences, the matter being connected as well as the words; is more beautiful than a short period. For instances of such periods, I refer the learned reader to two, quoted in the note below, one from Demosthenes, and the other from Cicero *. And the reader, if he be not learned, may be satisfied with those that I have already quoted from Mil-

* Demosthenes begins his third Philippic thus:— Πολλων, ὦ Ανδρες Αθηναιοι, λογων γιγνομενων, ολιγου δειν καθ' ἑκαστην εκκλησιαν, περι ὧν Φιλιππος, αφ' οὗ την ειρηνην εποιησατο, ου μονον ὑμας, αλλα και τους αλλους Ελληνας, αδικει· και παντων, ευ οιδ' ὁτι, φησαιτων γε αν (ει και μη ποιουσι τουτο,) και λεγειν δειν, και πραττειν ἁπασι προσηκειν, ὁπως

ton; or, if he desires longer ones, he will find great plenty of such in his controversial prose writings.

ἐκεινος παυσεται της ὑβρεως, και δικην δωσει· εις τουτο ὑπηγμενα παντα τα πραγματα, και προειμενα, ὁρω, ὥστε δεδοικα, μη, βλασφημον μεν ειπειν, αληθες δε η· ει και λεγειν ἁπαντες εβουλοντο ἁ παριοντες, και χειροτονειν ὑμεις, εξ ὡν ὡς φαυλοτατα εμελλε τα πραγματα ἑξειν· ουκ αν ἡγουμαι, δυνασθαι χειρον, η νυν, διατεθηναι.

Cicero begins his oration for Archias the poet, in this manner:—'Si quid est in me ingenii, Judices, quod sentio quam sit exiguum; aut si qua exercitatio dicendi, in qua me non inficior mediocriter esse versatum; aut si hujusce rei ratio aliqua ab optimarum artium studiis, et disciplina, profecta, a qua ego nullum confiteor aetatis meae tempus abhorruisse; earum rerum omnium, vel in primis, hic A. Licinius fructum a me repetere prope suo jure debet.'

Cicero's composition in this exordium is, no doubt, very good; but it has neither the compass nor variety of Demosthenes's period, which contains a great deal of more matter, and has more members, and these more deversified by hyperbatons and parentheses. The connection too of the several members is more artificially varied; for those of Cicero's period, all except one, begin with *si*, or *aut si*. The Halicarnassian, § 9. περι της δεινοτητος του Δημοσθενους, gives it as an example of the manner of Thucydides, imitated by Demosthenes. But, tho' Thucydides be the most obscure of all authors of any value, and though the composition here has, no doubt, a great deal of the character of Thucydides; yet there is not the least obscurity in it, to a man who understands the lan-

But all periods muſt not be of the ſame kind, but different in different ſtyles. The hiſtoric period, for example, muſt flow more looſely than the oratorial, which ſhould be more aſtricted, and, as it were, contorted. For, as the tone of the voice and pronunciation in argument and contention is different from what it is in plain narrative, ſo muſt the compoſition be. Theſe differences are obſerved and explained by the antient critics, and particularly by the Halicarnaſſian; and to them I refer for further information on this head *.

guage. And, I am convinced, that, as it was ſpoken by Demoſthenes, it not only filled and pleaſed the ears of the hearers, but conveyed to them the ſentiment which concludes it with very much more force than it could have done, if it had been frittered and broken down into ſhort ſentences, after the manner of Tacitus and Seneca. I ſhall only further obſerve, upon this fine period, that there is not one metaphor or other trope in it; nothing ſhining or ſplendid of any kind in the words, but all of them common, and of ordinary uſe—no *purple patches*; not even a ſingle *verbum decorum*, to uſe an expreſſion of Horace; yet the compoſition moſt beautiful, and the fartheſt in the world from being vulgar or trivial—*Tantum ſeries juncturaque pollet*.

* See Dionyſius's Treatiſes on *Thucydides* and *Demoſthenes*.

Digitized by Google

Further: In ſome kinds of compoſition periods are not at all proper; as in the epiſtolary and the familiar ſtyle, where the beſt compoſed periods would offend a man of correct taſte. And in no kind of compoſition muſt all be periodized; for that would make the ſtyle too uniform, wanting that variety which, as I have ſaid, is the chief beauty of all the works of art; and, beſides, the ſenſe might often be injured by it. There ſhould therefore, be thrown in among the periods, now and then, ſome ſhort *commatic* ſentences, as the Greek maſters of the art call them, ſuch as interrogations, to raiſe the attention of the reader or the hearer; or even ſome things in the argument or narrative, which may have a better effect ſtanding by themſelves, than thrown into a period with other things; for this is a matter of taſte and judgment, which cannot be directed by any rule.

And thus I have finiſhed what I have to ſay of compoſition, with reſpect to the ſound, and the pleaſure of the ear, which no good compoſer will neglect; for, through

Digitized by Google

the ear, the mind is not a little affected, even of the beſt judges. And, as to the people, they may be ſaid to be *led by the ears*. And, accordingly, the ſtatue of the Galic Hercules, who, it ſeems, was their god of eloquence, was repreſented, as Lucian deſcribes him, drawing the multitude after him by a chain, which reached from his mouth to their ears*.—In the next chapter, I am to treat of the ſecond way, according to my diviſion, by which compoſition is varied, viz. figured conſtruction.

* Lucian's Treatiſe of the *Galic Hercules*.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VI.

Of figures of ſyntax.—The Elliptis.—The Parentheſis.—Repetition.—Paronomaſia.—Like endings.—Pariſoſis.—In conſequence.—Foreign idioms.—A figure of Milton without example.—Tranpoſition of words.

THE ornaments of ſpeech, of which I am now to treat, are, in the language of antient criticiſm, called *figures*, in contradiſtinction to tropes, which are immutations of ſingle words. But we, who do not diſtinguiſh ſo nicely, call by the name of *figure* every mode of expreſſion different from the common, whether relative to ſingle words, or the compoſition of them.

The figures of conſtruction, which are the ſubject of this chapter, although they be treated of in our common grammars, do not properly belong to the gram-

Digitized by Google

matical art, not being neceſſary to language, but ornamental, like every thing elſe we call figures of ſpeech; and many of them are ſo far from being according to the grammatical rules of ſyntax, that they are exceptions or deviations from thoſe rules; and all of them are ways of ſpeaking unuſual and different from plain grammatical ſpeech.

In languages, ſuch as the Greek and Latin, ſo much more artificial than ours, it is evident that there muſt be many more figures of this kind. For the rules of their ſyntax being more various, muſt neceſſarily admit of more exceptions, and more ways of throwing the ſtyle out of common idiom; ſo that in this reſpect, as well as in every other, they could diverſify and adorn their ſtyle more than we can do*. But, as I do not intend to treat of ornaments of ſpeech,

* I will give but one example of this, taken from the uſe of genders, which the Greeks have, and we have not. By changing theſe, they varied their compoſition, without in the leaſt obſcuring the ſenſe. Thus, when Helen ſays to Telemachus in the Odyſſey,

Δωρον τοι και εγω, τεκνον φιλε, τυτο διδωμι,

Digitized by Google

that will apply to the learned languages alone, I ſhall mention only ſuch figures of this kind as will apply equally to thoſe languages and to ours; and I will begin with a well known one, viz. *ellipſis*, which

ſhe changes the gender from the word to the perſon, which makes a compoſition very different from the common; and yet the ſenſe is not at all obſcure or ambiguous, but rather more perſpicuous, by ſhewing that the child was a male. Of the ſame kind is what Dione ſays to Venus, in the Iliad,

Τετλαθι, τεκνον ἐμον, καὶ ἀνάσχεο, κηδομενη περ.

Likewiſe what is ſaid of the ghoſt of Tireſias in the Odyſſey,

——— ἠλθι δ' ἐπι Ψυχη Θηβαιου Τειρεσιαο,
Σκηπτρον ἐχων.

And there is a paſſage in the ſecond Iliad, where Homer twice changes the gender. It is that fine ſimile of the birds, to which he compares the Grecian hoſt, when they crowded from their ſhips to be drawn up in battle againſt the Trojans:

Τῶν δ', ὡς', ὀρνιθων πετεηνων ἐθνεα πολλα
Χηνων, ἠ γερανων, ἠ κυκνων δουλιχοδειρων,
Ασιῳ ἐν λειμωνι, Καϋστριου ἀμφι ῥεεθρα,
Ενθα καὶ ἐνθα ποτῶνται ἀγαλλομεναι πτερυγεσσι,
Κλαγγηδον προκαθιζοντων, σμαραγει δε τε λειμων.

where, from the neuter word ἐθνεα, he goes to the feminine ἀγαλλομεναι, agreeing with ὀρνιθες, and returns again to the neuter, in the participle προκαθιζοντων.

Digitized by Google

is, when one or more words are wanting, that, by the rules of grammar, are required to complete the ſenſe. Examples of it are ſo common in Greek and Latin, that I need not quote them. It is not ſo common in our language, any more than in other modern languages. But I will give one or two examples of it from our great Milton, who wrote at a time when there was no imitation of French authors among us, nor of any other, except the great antient authors, and of the Greek more than the Roman, who were themſelves conſidered only as imitators. The authors, therefore, of that age endeavoured to bring our language as near to this claſſical ſtandard as poſſible, and particularly Milton, from whom I am to take my examples *. There is one paſſage that

* This author I have frequently mentioned before, and ſhall, in the ſequel, quote him oftener than any other Engliſh writer, becauſe I conſider him as the beſt ſtandard for ſtyle, and all the ornaments of ſpeech, that we have in our language. He was a ſingular man in this reſpect, that he had as much original genius as any man, and, at the ſame time, more learning than perhaps any, even of that learned age in which he lived. For, it appears from his writings, both in proſe and verſe, and particularly from his little tractate upon

Digitized by Google

furniſhes two examples of the ellipſis. It is where Adam, taking leave of the angel, ſays,

——Since to part,
Go heavenly gueſt, ætherial meſſenger,
Sent from whoſe ſovereign goodneſs I adore.
book 8. v. 645.

education, that his courſe of ſtudy had taken in the whole circle of human knowledge. His poetic genius appeared very early, both in Latin and Engliſh; and there is an elegiac epiſtle of his in Latin, written, as it is ſuppoſed, when he was about ſeventeen or eighteen years old, to his companion Carolus Diodati, who, it ſeems, had preſſed him much to leave London, where he was then reſiding, and return to the univerſity of Cambridge, where he had been educated, which I will venture to ſet againſt any thing of the elegiac kind to be found in Ovid, or even in Tibullus. I ſhall only quote four verſes of it, which will give the reader ſome taſte of the whole. It is where he ſpeaks of his reſidence in London, the place of his birth:

Me tenet urbs, reflua quam Tameſis alluit unda;
Meque, nec invitum, patria dulcis habet.
O utinam vates nunquam graviora tuliſſet,
Ille Tomitano flebilis exul agro!

There can be nothing, I think, finer of the elegiac kind than in theſe lines. In the firſt, London is moſt beautifully and poetically deſcribed, by the circumſtance of its being waſhed by the reſluent water of the Thames. The ſecond line has the proper cadence, as well as turn of expreſſion of this kind of verſe; and the two laſt lines, for the elegance of the compoſition, and the ſweetneſs of the verſification, are hardly to be matched in Latin,

Digitized by Google

In the firſt we muſt ſupply, *it is neceſſary*; ſo that the full phraſe is, *ſince to part is neceſſary*. This is an ellipſis common enough in Greek, where the word δει, ſignifying *it muſt be*, is underſtood. The other is the ellipſis of the pronoun *him*; ſo that the complete phraſe is, *ſent from him, whoſe goodneſs I adore*. There is another of the ſame kind, where he ſays, ſpeaking to his muſe,

or in any other language. It is pleaſant, I think, to obſerve this great genius 'teneris juveneſcens verſibus,' to uſe an expreſſion of Horace, wantoning in the ſoft elegiac, playing with fable and mythology, as he does in thoſe Latin poems; and, by this exerciſe of his young muſe, preluding to his great work, which he executed in the full maturity of his age,

'Long chuſing and beginning late;'

I mean his *Paradiſe Loſt*. To his other accompliſhments, he joined the advantage of travelling, and in a country which was then the ſeat of arts and ſciences; I mean Italy, where it appears that he applied himſelf much to the ſtudy of the Italian authors, particularly the poets. And his muſe exerciſed herſelf in that language, as well as in Greek, Latin, and Engliſh. And though his genius was ſo early, and even what may be called premature; yet it did not, like other things that grow haſtily, decline ſoon. For, at the age of ſixty-two, when, beſides his blindneſs, and the infirmities accompanying ſo advanced a period of

Digitized by Google

So fail not thou, who thee implores. B. 7. v. 38.

It is like that of the word *illa* in Virgil, where he ſays,

Canto quæ ſolitus, ſi quando armenta vocaret. *Ecl.* 2.

Milton has ſometimes left out the ſign of the infinitive mood, viz. the particle *to*, where he thought it would occaſion no ambiguity; as where he makes Beelzebub ſay, in the council of the devils, that, by getting poſſeſſion of this earth, they would be lifted up nearer to their antient ſeat:

——Perhaps in view
Of thoſe bright confines, whence, with neighbouring arms,
In opportune excurſion, we may chance
Re-enter heaven.——

unleſs we ſhould chuſe to underſtand *chance* there as an adverb, of the ſame ſignification with *perhaps*.

life, he was involved in the ruin of his party, and, as he himſelf has ſaid,

——Fallen on evil days, and evil tongues;
With dangers and with darkneſs compaſs'd round,
And ſolitude.

He wrote the *Sampſon Agoniſtes*, the laſt and the moſt faultleſs, in my judgment, of all his poetical works, if

But there is another example where there can be no doubt of the ellipſis. It is where he ſays,

——Champions bold
Wont ride in armed—— Book 1. v. 764.

in place of *wont to ride.*

Another ellipſis, in the ſame author, is to be found, book 10. v. 157.

So having ſaid, he thus to Eve in *few*—

where *words* are underſtood; an ellipſis very common both in Greek and Latin.

There is another figure of conſtruction, very common in antient authors, which we call *parentheſis*, by which a whole member of a ſentence often is thrown in, that is not conſtrued with the reſt of the ſentence; ſo that it might be left out, and yet the ſenſe and ſyntax be complete. Some of our

not the fineſt. And his poetic genius was as extenſive as it was laſting; for it is difficult to ſay whether he excels moſt in the heroic, the tragic, the elegiac, the lyric, the paſtoral, or the anacreontic. Of this laſt kind is a great part of the Comus, which is not to be equalled for ſcenes of feſtivity, jollity and riotous mirth, as well as for the nobleſt ſentiments of virtue.

Digitized by Google

modern ſmatterers in criticiſm condemn this figure, as interrupting the connection, and obſcuring the ſenſe. But the great antient writers judged otherwiſe. I took occaſion, in the preceeding volume *, to quote a remarkable one of Virgil, in the firſt Georgic, beginning with this verſe,

Quicquid eris (nam te nec ſperent Tartara regem, &c.)

There is one in Homer, which may be ſeen at the bottom of the page †. Horace begins an ode with one of them; it is the eleventh of the third book.

Mercuri, (nam te docilis magiſtro
Movit Amphion lapides canendo)
Tuque, Teſtudo, reſonare ſeptem
Callida nervis.

And there is one in the fourth ode of the fourth book ſo long, that it may be called a digreſſion. And, that we may not think this a poetical licence, the proſe writers uſe this figure as often as the poets, and parti-

* See Differt. 3. annexed to vol. 2. p. 561, and 562.

† ——— Αργειοι δε μιγ' ιαχον (αμφι δε νηες
Σμερδαλεον κοναβησαν αϋσαντων υπ' Αχαιων)
Μυθων ιηαινησαντες Οδυσσηος θειοιο. Il. 2. v. 333.

Digitized by Google

cularly Demoſthenes is full of it, having ſometimes parentheſes within parentheſes *, which, by his great art of pronunciation, he had, no doubt, the ſkill to make not only intelligible, but even agreeable to his hearers.

Milton in this, as in other things, followed the taſte and judgment of the antients, thinking that he could not vary his compoſition ſufficiently, nor ſometimes convey the ſenſe ſo forcibly as he would wiſh, without the uſe of this figure. Accordingly, he has uſed it very much, more than, I believe, has been commonly obſerved, of

* The Halicarnaſſian in his Treatiſe, περὶ τῆς λεκτικης Δημοσθενης δεινοτητος, *cap.* 9. *p.* 275. has given, from the oration againſt Midias, an example of this, which he has explained at great length. The words of Demoſthenes are, εμοι δε ὁς (εἰτε τις, ὦ Αθηναιοι, βυλεται νομισαι μανιαν (μανια γαρ ἰσως ἐστιν ὑπερ δυναμιν τὶ ποιειν) ὡτε και φιλοτιμιαν) χρηγος ὑπεστην. This is as remote from what the Halicarnaſſian calls ἐυθεια ἑρμηνεια, or plain ſpeech, and as much ἐξηλλαγμενον and πολυπλοκον as almoſt any thing to be found in Thucydides; and yet I can very well conceive, how his pronunciation might make it not only intelligible, but agreeable to the ears of his hearers, and perhaps convey the meaning more forcibly than he could have done otherwiſe.

Digitized by Google

which I have elſewhere * given an inſtance, in that fine paſſage of the ſecond book, where he deſcribes Belial riſing to ſpeak. And, as Horace begins an ode with a parentheſis, ſo he begins Satan's ſpeech, in the beginning of the ſecond book, with one, and a very long one too, in this manner:

Powers and dominions, Deities of heaven!
(For ſince no deep within her gulph can hold
Immortal vigour, tho' oppreſs'd and fallen,
I give not heaven for loſt: From this deſcent
Celeſtial virtues riſing, will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And truſt themſelves to fear no ſecond fate)
Me tho' juſt right, and the fixt laws of heaven, &c.

I will give one other inſtance from Milton of a parentheſis, which I think very beautiful. It is in the Comus, where the younger brother, ſpeaking of the ſituation of his ſiſter, ſays,

I do not think my ſiſter ſo to ſeek,
Or ſo unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the ſweet peace that goodneſs boſoms ever,
As that the ſingle want of light or noiſe
(Not being in danger, as I truſt ſhe is not)
Should ſtir the conſtant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into miſbecoming plight.

* See Diſſert. 3. vol. 2. p. 561.

Digitized by Google

The whole paſſage is exceedingly beautiful; but what I praiſe in the parentheſis is, the pathos and concern for his ſiſter that it expreſſes. For every parentheſis ſhould contain matter of weight; and, if it throws in ſome paſſion or feeling into the diſcourſe, it is ſo much the better, becauſe it furniſhes the ſpeaker with a proper occaſion to vary the tone of his voice, which ought always to be done in ſpeaking a parentheſis, but is never more properly done than when ſome paſſion is to be expreſſed. And we may obſerve here, that there ought to be two variations of the voice in ſpeaking this parentheſis. The firſt is that tone which we uſe when we mean to qualify or reſtrict any thing that we have ſaid before. With this tone ſhould be pronounced, *not being in danger*; and the ſecond member, *as I truſt ſhe is not*, ſhould be pronounced with that pathetic tone in which we earneſtly hope or pray for any thing. The parentheſis in Demoſthenes, quoted in the preceding note, though it be, as I have ſaid, a parentheſis within a parentheſis, which is a mode of

Digitized by Google

compoſition that is generally very much condemned; yet, if pronounced with ſuch proper variations of tone, as the ſenſe not only admits, but requires, it would convey the meaning both clearly and emphatically, and would, at the ſame time, very much pleaſe the ear. But, though ſuch variations of the voice be very agreeable, I hold it to be a great fault in ſpeaking, and a common player-trick, to vary the voice for the pleaſure of the ear merely, without the ſenſe requiring it. The common reaſon given for it is, to avoid monotony; but, if the compoſition be good, there will be variety enough in the matter to furniſh occaſion for a ſufficient variation of the voice. And, if ever there ſhould be a monotony continued for ſome time, it would offend a good judge leſs than an affected change of the voice.

Though compoſition, in order to be beautiful, muſt be various, it ought not to be like Mr. Bayes's play, where no one thing was to be like another *; but there

* 'Becauſe I would not,' ſays Mr. Bayes, 'have any one 'thing in this play like another; as I began the laſt act 'with a funeral, I begin this with a dance,' *Rehearſal.*

Digitized by Google

ſhould be ſimilarity, as well as diverſity. There are, therefore, certain figures, the beauty of which conſiſts in the words having a reſemblance to one another. The firſt of this kind I ſhall mention, is *repetition*, of which there is a remarkable inſtance in Homer, where he mentions Nireus in his catalogue. This Nireus was but a poor warrior. He brought to Troy no more than three ſhips, the ſmalleſt number that followed any of the Greek leaders.

I do not know any piece, antient or modern, in which a falſe taſte of writing is better ridiculed than in the Rehearſal. It is a piece that, I believe, is *ſingular* of the kind; for, though the ridicule of the bombaſt of tragedy was a ſpecies of wit much in uſe among the antient comic writers, yet I do not know that a whole piece of that ſort was written by any of them; at leaſt, no ſuch piece has come down to us. But, if ſuch a piece had been preſerved, there is a humorous circumſtance in the Rehearſal, which, I am perſuaded, is the invention of the author. The circumſtance I mean is, that of making Mr. Bayes the ſpectator of his own play, with two other ſpectators, one of whom flatters him, and the other contradicts and finds fault with him;—the way, of all others, the moſt proper to make a fool ſhow himſelf. As falſe taſte never can be truly ridiculed but by one who has himſelf a good taſte, the Duke of Buckingham, in this piece, has ſhewn that he was as good a critic, and had as correct a taſte in writing, as perhaps any man that ever was in England.

Digitized by Google

But, as he was a very handſome man, and the exactneſs of Homer's catalogue, which, I am perſuaded, was taken from ſome written monument then extant, required that he ſhould be mentioned among the other commanders; in order to give him ſome kind of heroic dignity, and, at the ſame time, to adorn his verſe, he has named him thrice in three verſes, and in the ſame place, viz. at the head of each verſe *, which makes the figure aſſume the name of ἐπαναφορα in Greek †. This is a common figure in all languages, and in all kinds of compoſition. It gives not only a beauty to the ſtyle, when diſcreetly and properly uſed, but a great pathos, as in theſe fine lines of Virgil:

Te, dulcis conjux, te ſolo in littore ſecum,
Te veniente die, te decedente canebat.

And I remember a paſſage in Milton where it has the ſame effect. It is in the ſecond

* Νιρευς δ' αὐ συμηθεν αγεν τρεις νηας ἑισας,
Νιρευς Αγλαϊης θ' ὑιος, Χαροποιο τ' ἀνακτος.
Νιρευς, ὸς καλλιστος ἀνηρ ὑπο Ιλιον ἠλθε,
Τῶν ἀλλων Δαναῶν, μετ' ἀμυμονα Πηλειωνα. v. 671.

† See the life of Homer above quoted.

Digitized by Google

book, where Beelzebub, ſpeaking of the diſturbance that the fall of man would give to the Almighty, ſays,

——his darling ſons
Hurled headlong to partake with us, ſhall curſe
Their frail original, and faded bliſs,
Faded ſo ſoon.——

And there is another paſſage in the ſeventh book, where the repetition is of more words, and the pathos ſtill greater;

——Tho' fallen on evil days,
On evil days tho' fallen, and evil tongues,
In darkneſs, and with dangers compaſs'd round,
And ſolitude, &c. v. 25.

Beſides pathos, it expreſſes alſo vehemence of contention, and is properly uſed when we want to inforce any thing very ſtrongly. It is, therefore, a figure very proper for rhetorical compoſition; and, accordingly, it is much uſed by the orators, and particularly by Cicero; but he ſometimes uſes it, as well as other figures, intemperately, as in the oration *pro Archia poëta*, *c.* 6. where there is this paſſage: 'Quare quis tandem 'me reprehendat, aut quis mihi jure ſuc- 'cenſeat, ſi, quantum cæteris ad ſuas res 'obeundas, quantum ad feſtos dies ludo-

Digitized by Google

'rum celebrandos; quantum ad alias vo-
'luptates, et ad ipſam requiem animi et
'corporis conceditur temporis; quantum
'alii tribuunt tempeſtivis conviviis; quan-
'tum denique aleæ, quantum pilæ; tan-
'tum mihi egomet ad hæc ſtudia recolen-
'da ſumpſero.' Here he dwells much too long upon the word *quantum*, even though there were any pathos to be expreſſed, or vehemence of contention. But the ſubject admits of neither. For he is talking of his own application to ſtudy, very commendable indeed, but which had no relation to the queſtion in hand, whether or not Archias was a Roman citizen; and it is one of thoſe digreſſions of vanity, in which Cicero indulges himſelf much too often in his orations, and, indeed, in almoſt all his writings. Demoſthenes uſes this figure too, but much more ſparingly, and never but with a ſtrict regard to decorum and propriety. And, I think, I may venture to affirm, that there is not, in any of his orations, one example of ſuch a tedious and unmeaning repetition. I doubt not, however, but that Cicero would be much applauded and clapped (ſo the Ro-

Digitized by Google

mans praiſed their orators) for this whole ſentence, divided into members, all beginning with the ſame word, and the greateſt part of the ſame length, and of the ſame ſtructure and form of compoſition. This kind of concinnity, or prettineſs, as we may call it, would be very much admired by men who had formed their taſte of ſpeaking upon the practice of the ſchools of declamation then in Rome, in which Latin rhetoricians were the teachers, who, as Cicero himſelf confeſſes*, were not comparable to the Greek maſters: But, I am perſuaded, it would not have been tolerated in Athens, not even in an epidictic oration, ſpoken merely for the pleaſure and entertainment of the hearers; much leſs in a pleading, or ſpeech of buſineſs.

A-kin to this figure, is one called in Greek παρονομασια, by which words of like ſound, and ſometimes the ſame word repeated, are thrown together, ſo as to make a jingle, not unpleaſant to the ear, if ſparingly and properly uſed: For it ought not to be uſed without a reaſon; and the reaſon

* Brut. p. 357. 432. *Edit. Lambini.*

Digitized by Google

commonly is to affirm or deny a thing ſtrongly. Thus Homer ſays,

Οὐδὲ γαρ ἡδ' Δρυαντος υἱος, κρατερος Λυκουργος *, &c.

meaning to affirm ſtrongly that this Lycurgus did not live long after contending with the gods. Plato has uſed it often, but ſometimes, I think, intemperately†. In Engliſh it has a good effect both in proſe and verſe, when it falls in naturally, and does not appear to be ſtudiouſly ſought; it is called, I obſerve, *alliteration* by ſome Engliſh critics; and it no doubt pleaſes the ear, by making the words run glibly, or, as Shakeſpeare expreſſes it, *trippingly* off the tongue.

There is another figure of likeneſs or ſimilarity, well known, and but too much

* Iliad 6. v. 30.

† The Halicarnaſſian has taken notice of one paſſage of this kind in his ἐπιταφιος λογος. It is in theſe words: ὧν ἑνεκα, καὶ πρωτον, καὶ ὑςατον, καὶ δια παντος, πᾶσαν σαντως προθυμιαν πειρασθε ἐχειν; *Dion. Halic.* περὶ τῆς δεινοτητος τῦ Δημοσθενες; *c.* 26. *Edit. Hudſon.* And, even in his philoſophical reaſonings, there is often too much of this kind of jingle.

Digitized by Google

practiſed among us; I mean the figure of like endings, by which verſes or half verſes, ſentences, or members of ſentences, are terminated by the ſame ſyllables, one or more. This figure is ſometimes uſed by Homer, and often by the Greek orators, eſpecially in their epidictic orations; and, when ſparingly and properly uſed, is no doubt an ornament of ſtyle *. We always avoid

* Homer, I obſerve, uſes it, when he has a mind to make his verſe very ſweet and flowing, as in his ſimilies, which are the moſt ornamented parts of his poem. Thus, in the firſt ſimile of the Iliad, he has even double rhymes concluding the verſe.

Ηϋτε ἐθνεα εἶσι μελισσαων ἀδιναων,
Πετρης ἐκ γλαφυρης ἀιει νεον ἐρχομεναων. Il. 2. v. 87.

But the rhymes of his hemiſtichs are more common, as in the ſimile of the nightingale in the Odyſſey,

Ὡς δ' ὁτε πανδαριῳ κȣρη χλωρηϊς ὠηδων
Καλον ἀειδησιν, ἐαρος νεον ἱσταμενοιο,
Δενδρεων ἐν πεταλοισι καθεζομενη πυκινοισι.

And, in his deſcription of heaven, in the ſame work,

Ουλυμπονδε, ὁθι φασι θεων ἑδος ἀσφαλες αιει
Εμμεναι, ȣτ' ἀνεμοισι τινασσεται, ȣτε ποτ' ὀμβρῳ
Δευεται, ȣτε χιων ἐπιπιλναται, ἀλλα μαλ' αιθρη
Πεπταται ἀνεφελος, λευκη δ' ἐπιδεδρομεν αἰγλη.

But, in other places, where there is neither ſimile nor deſcription, he has avoided ſuch rhymes, as his commentators have obſerved, when he might have had them. As the Latins have not ſuch ſweet terminations, they do

Digitized by Google

it in proſe, having got, as it would ſeem, a ſurfeit of it in verſe.

Another of this kind is what is called in Greek παρισωσις, when the words in different ſentences, or different members of the ſame ſentence, anſwer exactly to one another, being the ſame parts of ſpeech, in the ſame caſe or tenſe, if declineable, and occupying the ſame place in the ſentence. And, in general, I comprehend under this figure every ſimilarity in the compoſition, by which like is referred to like, oppoſite to oppoſite, and the cadence of different ſentences, or different members of the ſame ſentence, is made the ſame. This alſo pleaſes the ear, if not uſed to ſatiety; and it is a beauty of diction likewiſe not unknown

not uſe this ornament in their verſe; for their *orum* and *arum* have but a diſagreeable ſound, compared with the ων or αων, the οιο or the οισι of the Greeks. I hold, therefore, ſuch rhymes to be a fault in Latin verſe, as in that of Horace,

'Atque alii quorum comœdia priſca virorum,'

which, I am perſuaded, was not ſtudied by Horace; but he let it paſs, rather than take the trouble to follow his own precept, and

——— 'incudi reddere verſum.

Digitized by Google

to Homer *. It is frequently uſed by the Greek orators, and more ſtill by Cicero. In his oration *pro Sexto Roſcio Amerino*, ſpeaking of the puniſhment of parri-

* He ſays,

Ἀιδεσθεν μεν ἀνηνασθαι, δεισαν δ' ὑποδεχθαι. Il. η. v. 93.

And again,

Μηνιθμον μεν αποῤῥιψαι, φιλοτητα δ' ἑλεσθαι.

The mere modern reader, if I ſhall have any ſuch, will be ſurpriſed to find, that I have quoted Homer ſo often for examples of the ornaments of ſpeech; and he will be ſtill more ſurpriſed when I tell him, that there is not a beauty of language, of any kind, that is known in this learned and refined age (to ſpeak in the faſhionable ſtyle) but what is practiſed by Homer, who lived in a barbarous age and nation, as is commonly thought. And I think I may venture to add, that no ornament of ſpeech can be deviſed that is not to be found in him. But the learned know, that, in Homer's time, and before him, in the age of the Trojan war, ſpeaking was become an art, which diſtinguiſhed men as much as fighting. Phœnix tells Achilles that he received him from his father,

Νηπιον, ὑπω ἐιδοθ' ὁμοιϊυ πολεμοιο,
Ὀυδ' ἀγορεων, ἱνα τ' ἀνδρες ἀριπρεπεες τελεθυσι. Il. 9. v. 440.

but he taught him

Μυθων τερητηρ' ἐμεναι, πρηκτηρα τε ἐργων. Ib. v. 244.

Even at this day, the nations of North-America have an art of ſpeaking; and it is well known to thoſe that have been among them, that their orators are in high eſtimation, and that they are as attentive to preſerve the purity and elegance of their language as the moſt civilized nations

Digitized by Google

cide among the Romans, he has theſe words: 'Etenim quid tam eſt commune, 'quam ſpiritus vivis, terra mortuis, mare 'fluctuantibus, littus ejectis? Ita vivunt, 'dum poſſunt, ut ducere animam de coelo 'non queant: Ita moriunter, ut eorum oſſa 'terra non tangat: ita jactantur fluctibus, ut 'nunquam abluantur: Ita poſtremo ejiciun-'tur, ut nead ſaxa quidem mortui conquieſ-'cant.' Here there is a great deal too much of this artifice of compoſition; and, accordingly, he himſelf finds fault with it, and pleads for his excuſe, that this oration was a juvenile performance. But, I think, there is too much of it, even in that famous oration which he ſpoke for Milo, when he was in the fulneſs of years and of glory, though, from what he ſays of it in his *Orator ad M. Brut. c.* 49. written when his judgment

in Europe. Yet they are no better than abſolute barbarians, and are truly what we call them, *ſavages*, compared with the Greeks in the days of Homer, or the Trojan war. For, beſides the many neceſſary arts of life, as we think them, which they want, and the Greeks then had, ſuch as agriculture and paſturage, and all the ſeveral arts of Vulcan and Minerva, they have no poetry, which was an art, as we ſee, perfectly well underſtood in the days of Homer, and which contributes ſo much to improve language, and, by conſequence, the oratorial art.

Digitized by Google

was ſtill more mature by age, he ſeems to be pleaſed with it: 'Eſt enim, judices, hæc 'non ſcripta, ſed nata lex: Quam non di- 'dicimus, accepimus, legimus; verum ex 'natura ipſa arripuimus, hauſimus, expreſ- 'ſimus: Ad quam, non docti, ſed facti: 'Non inſtituti, ſed imbuti ſumus.' But, though the exceſs be blameable, it cannot be denied that it is a figure which gives a concinnity to an oration that is very agreeable; and I think we are obliged to Gorgias the ſophiſt, who firſt invented it, as Cicero tells us, a little after the paſſage above quoted in his Orator, c. 52. And, if we can believe Cicero, till the time of Iſocrates, there were no other numbers known in proſe, except ſuch as were formed by this correſpondence of words to one another. For he tells us *, that Iſocrates firſt diſcovered there might be numbers in proſe, without run-

* 'Itaque ſi quæ veteres illi (Herodotum dico, et Thu- 'cydidem, totamque illam ætatem) apte numeroſeque 'dixerunt, ea non numero quæſito, ſed verborum collo- 'catione ceciderunt. Formae vero quaedam ſunt ora- 'tionis, in quibus ea concinnitas ineſt, ut ſequatur nu- 'merus neceſſario. Nam cum aut par pari refertur, aut 'contrarium contrario opponitur, aut quæ ſimiliter ca- 'dunt verba verbis comparantur. Quidquid ita conclu- 'ditur, plerumque fit ut numeroſe cadat;' *Orator ad M. Brutum, c.* 65. *See alſo c.* 55. But, as I have elſewhere

Digitized by Google

ning it into verſe. But, before his time, every thing that could be called numerous in proſe compoſition, was owing to the order of the words, by which like was referred to like, contrary oppoſed to contrary, and words ending in the ſame manner were ſet againſt one another *. In Engliſh, and in every other language, it muſt produce a very good effect, when ſparingly, and not affectedly uſed. But I would adviſe the Engliſh orator to uſe it as Demoſthenes and the other great orators of Greece have uſed it, not ſo intemperately as, I think, Cicero

obſerved, the Halicarnaſſian is of a different opinion, and thinks that the great proſe-authors, even before Iſocrates, ſtudied numbers, properly ſo called, that is, ſuch as ariſe from the mixture of ſhort and long ſyllables; and I confeſs I pay more regard to the opinion of the Halicarnaſſian than to that of Cicero, eſpecially in his judgment of the authors of his own country; nor do I think that it is poſſible for any man of taſte to read Herodotus with attention, and not be convinced that he ſtudied theſe numbers, even more than the numbers of which Cicero ſpeaks, and which, as I ſhall obſerve preſently, were much more practiſed by him than by any Greek writer.

* De Clar. Orator. cap. 8.

Digitized by Google

has done. For the moſt admired paſſages of that kind in this author, ſuch as that above quoted from the oration *pro Milone*, and another in the oration *pro Archia Poëta**, which is in the mouth of almoſt every ſcholar, I would not recommend to the imitation of any writer or ſpeaker.

Under the *pariſoſis*, according to the definition I have given of it, is comprehended the well-known figure of *antitheſis*; ſo well known, and ſo much practiſed in all kinds of compoſition, both antient and modern, that it would be ſuperfluous to give examples of it;

* 'Hæc ſtudia adoleſcentiam alunt, ſenectutem oblectant, ſecundas res ornant, adverſis perfugium ac ſolatium præbent, delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiſcum, peregrinantur, ruſticantur.'

If this manner be fine, I deſire to know why there is nothing like it to be found in any Greek writer, not even in the ſophiſts of later times, who write orations of ſhow and oſtentation, not of buſineſs, ſuch as thoſe of Cicero? And, indeed, I cannot help ſaying, that it is a ſtyle altogether unfit for buſineſs and real life, ſuch as could only have been produced in a ſchool of declamation, and fit only to gain the applauſe of the boys there, or of a people as rude and untaught as the generality of the people of Rome were in the days of Cicero.

Digitized by Google

or, if examples were neceſſary, theſe two which I have given from Cicero's orations, *pro Milone*, and *pro Archia Poëta*, are ſufficient; for there we have ſtrings of antitheſes; and beſides, we have the figure of like endings, and a perfect ſimilarity of the ſtructure, both as to the grammatical form of the words, and even the number of them in the ſeveral members of the period. Ariſtotle, in his rhetoric, has given examples of ſuch compoſition, from the epidictic or panegyrical orations of Iſocrates*; but it is uſed with much more moderation, even by Iſocrates. And, as to Demoſthenes, there is no ſuch playing with words to be found in him; for he wrote the ſtyle of buſineſs, not of pleaſure and oſtentation.

Theſe figures laſt mentioned belong to the ſound of the compoſition, of which I have already treated, as well as to the ſtructure of the words, of which I am now

* Thus Iſocrates, when ſpeaking of Xerxes' expedition againſt the Greeks, ſays, πλευσαι μεν δια της ηπειρου, πεζευσαι δε δια της θαλασσης τον μεν Ελλησποντον ζευξας, τον δε Αθω διορυξας; *Ariſtot. Rhetor. lib.* 3. *cap.* 10.

Digitized by Google

ſpeaking. And, indeed, a good compoſer will, in every ornament he uſes, ſtudy the pleaſure of the ear, as much as is conſiſtent with ſenſe and propriety. But I am now to mention one or two figures which have little or no relation to the ſound, but regard only the ſyntax.

The firſt I ſhall mention is called in Greek ἀναχολυθια, that is, *inconſequence* or inconnection, when the words, as they ſtand, will not at all connect together in conſtruction, nor without ſupplying ſome other words, or changing in ſome way the ſtructure of the ſentence. If this produced no obſcurity, it was judged by the antients an agreeable variety of compoſition, and it is uſed as ſuch by Homer *, the great fountain of eloquence, as well as poetry, and

* Of this kind there is a remarkable inſtance in the ſecond Iliad, in Neſtor's ſpeech, v. 350.

Φημι γὰρ ὲν κατανυσαι ὑπερμενια Κρονιωνα,
Ἡματι τῷ, ὁτε νησιν ἐπ' ὠκυπορουσιν ἐβαινον
Ἀργειοι, Τρωεσσι φονον καὶ κηρα φεροντες,
Ἀστραπτων ἐπὶ δεξι, ἰναισιμα σηματα φαινων.

where we have ἀστραπτων, inſtead of ἀστραπτοντα, and we muſt make out the connection by reſolving the participle

Digitized by Google

who has practiſed, if not invented, every art of ſpeech that has been uſed ſince his time, or, I believe, can be deviſed. The Greek proſe-writers likewiſe uſe this figure, eſpecially ſuch of them who, like Thucydides, affect the auſtere character of ſtyle; for it is not a pleaſant figure. And, as the Roman writers formed themſelves up-

into the verb, and making it ἠστραπτι, or ἀστραπτων ἠν; ſee the life of Homer above quoted, p. 307. And if we add the adverb τοτε, the connection will be evident. Another example is in Iliad 6. v. 510. where, ſpeaking of a horſe that had broke out of the ſtable, he ſays,

ὁ δ' ἀγλαϊηφι πεποιθας,
Ῥιμφα ἐγωνα φερει μετα τ' ηθεα καὶ νομον ἱππων·

where, in order to make out the ſyntax, we muſt likewiſe change the participle into the verb, and then, with the addition of an ἐπει, or ſome ſuch word, both the ſenſe and ſyntax will be completed.

Again,

Τω δε διακρινθεντε, ὁ μεν μετα λαον Ἀχαιων
Ἠιε· ὁ δ' ἐς Τρωων ὁμαδον κιε·

where the reſolution of the participle into the verb will do without more; or it may be conſtrued by making τω διακρινθεντε a nominative abſolute, ſuch as the Greeks uſe frequently. And, indeed, every caſe abſolute, or απολυτος, as they ſay, whether nominative, genitive, dative, or accuſative, (for the Greeks uſe them all) may be conſidered as a ſpecies of ἀνακόλουθια.

Digitized by Google

on the Greek, we are to expect to find it in them. There is a remarkable one in the Hecyra of Terence, act 3. ſc. 1. which runs thus: 'Nam nos omnes, quibus eſt 'alicunde aliquis objectus labos, omne quod 'eſt interea tempus, prius quam id reſcitum 'eſt, lucro eſt;' where, according to the rules of conſtruction, it ſhould be *nobis omnibus—lucro eſt.* To make it, therefore, conſtrue as it ſtands, we muſt ſupply *quoad*, or ſome ſuch word.

It is no doubt a figure that varies the ſtyle, and throws it much out of common ſpeech. But the uſe of it is dangerous; and, if it makes the ſtyle obſcure or ambiguous, it ought to be condemned as a ſoleciſm, of which it has, no doubt, the appearance; and, accordingly, the Greek critics call it σολοικοφανες. Our Engliſh writers do not attempt it, unleſs we dignify with the name of this figure ſome ſuch anomalous expreſſions as *methinks*, and *he would needs do it.* But we muſt except Milton, who was reſolved to be an antient in this reſpect, as well as every other. There is one inſtance that I remember, among others that may

Digitized by Google

be found. It is in the third book of Paradiſe Loſt, beginning at verſe 344.

No ſooner had the Almighty ceas'd, but all
The multitude of angels, with a ſhout,
Loud, as from numbers without number, ſweet,
As from bleſt voices uttering joy, heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud hoſannahs fill'd
The eternal regions.

The lines are ſo wonderfully fine, that if it were a real ſoleciſm, not to be juſtified by any antient authority, I could excuſe it. But it is to be juſtified in the ſame way as thoſe paſſages I have quoted from Homer. And I have no doubt but that Milton, who had all Homer by heart, as Dr. Bentley ſomewhere ſays, had thoſe paſſages in view, particularly the firſt, which very much reſembles this of Milton. I would, therefore, make out the ſyntax by ſupplying the verb *ſhouted*, or *received*; ſo that the full conſtruction will be, *The angels ſhouted with a ſhout*, or *received*, viz. what God Almighty had ſaid *with a ſhout*, *loud as from numbers without number*, &c. But, whatever way we ſolve the difficulty of the ſyntax, there is nothing obſcure in the ſenſe; and therefore I cannot condemn

Digitized by Google

the figure, though it be, no doubt, a very unuſual one in Engliſh*.

The next figure I am to ſpeak of is, perhaps, more properly a figure of conſtruction than any I have hitherto mentioned. For it is a change of the natural conſtruction of the language into one that is foreign to it,

* This paſſage may be ſo conſtrued as to need no ſupplement or alteration of the words to make out the ſentence, viz. by connecting the words *uttering joy*, with *all the multitude of angels*, and then it would be no more but an ablative abſolute, which indeed is a gaping, unconnected ſyntax, but ſo common in Engliſh, as well as in Greek and Latin, that it is not reckoned a figure. But this, in the firſt place, would be making the connection too remote, when the natural connection is with the word immediately preceeding, viz. *voices*, ſo that the conſtruction is, *voices uttering joy*. And, ſecondly, the ſenſe is better if we follow the natural connection, as *uttering joy* accounts ſo well for the ſweetneſs of the voices. I therefore think it is better to ſuppoſe, that Milton, in imitation of his great model Homer, intended to vary his ſtyle, and make it more poetical, by an anomalous conſtruction, but ſuch as does not at all obſcure the ſenſe.

Dr. Bentley underſtands this paſſage as I do; for he ſays, the ſentence is imperfect, being without a verb. But, inſtead of making a figure of it, he proceeds, according to his uſual method, to correct the text; and, inſtead of *with* a ſhout, reads, *gave* a ſhout.

Digitized by Google

being taken from a foreign language. It is well known in Latin, under the name of *Helleniſm**; for the Romans took their foreign idioms from the Greek. In the faſhionable Engliſh of this age, the idioms of that kind are Galliciſms. For one of our fine gentlemen, who, perhaps, knows no more of the French language than is ſufficient to corrupt his own, will ſay, *I have given to eat*, inſtead of ſaying, *I have given an entertain-*

* In the common Latin Grammars, I obſerve, that many unuſual ways of ſpeaking in that language are referred to a figure they call *antiptoſis*, or *enallage caſuum*; whereas they are truly Helleniſms. Thus, when Horace ſays, *uxor invicti Jovis eſſe neſcis*, they tell you that *uxor*, the nominative, is there put for *uxorem*, and that the ſentence ſhould be *neſcis te eſſe uxorem invicti Jovis*. But it is a Greek idiom, according to which, if the perſon of the verb, which governs the other in the infinitive, is not changed, the pronoun is not repeated, and the ſubſtantive, or adjective, which follows the verb in the infinitive, is of the ſame caſe with the perſon of the firſt verb, that is, of the nominative. In the ſame manner, when Cicero ſays, *rem quomodo ſe habeat vides*, it is not one caſe for another, viz. the accuſative *rem* for the nominative *res*; but it is a Græciſm: And, in general, to ſay, that one caſe is put for another, without giving a reaſon for it, is ungrammatical, and, as Dr. Clarke has obſerved, overturns all the rules of the art.

Digitized by Google

ment. And it is to be hoped, that he will come at laſt to improve his ſtyle ſo much, as to tell us, that *it does not make day* with him till twelve o'clock. But Milton drew the ornaments of his ſtyle from a better ſource, namely, the Greek and Latin, and chiefly the Greek. For it is evident, that not only his Engliſh, but his Latin, is cut upon Greek, as much, or perhaps more, than that written by any Roman. Of thoſe Greek or Latin conſtructions his works are full. I ſhall give an inſtance of one or two of them. In the ſecond book of Paradiſe Loſt, he makes Beelzebub ſay,

> Upborne with indefatigable wings,
> Over the vaſt abrupt, ere he arrive
> The happy iſle.

The conſtruction in Engliſh is, *arrive* at *the iſle.* But, inſtead of that, he has choſen the Latin idiom of *acceſſit inſulam*, or *ingreſſus eſt inſulam*, or the Greek ἐισηλθε τὴν νησον.

There is another inſtance in the beginning of book 9. v. 42. where he ſays,

> ——Me, of theſe
> Nor ſkill'd nor ſtudious, higher argument
> Awaits.

Digitized by Google

University of MICHIGAN

The uſual conſtruction in Engliſh is, *ſkilled in a thing*; but the Latin conſtruction is, *peritus alicujus rei*. Again, in book 9. v. 845. he ſays,

> Yet oft his heart, divine of ſomething ill,
> Miſgave him.

which is juſt the Latin, *mens divina futuri*. Again, ſpeaking of death, he ſays, that

> ——he upturned
> His noſtrils wide into the murky air,
> Sagacious of his quarry;

which is likewiſe a Latin idiom.

There is a third paſſage that I remember, which may be referred to this head. It is in the *Comus*, where he makes that magician addreſs the lady in a very high ſtyle of claſſical gallantry:

> Hail, foreign wonder! whom certain theſe rough ſhades
> Did never breed; unleſs the goddeſs, that in rural ſhrine
> Dwell'ſt here with Pan or Sylvan, by bleſt ſong
> Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
> To touch the proſp'rous growth of this tall wood.

As Cicero ſays of Plato's language, that, if Jupiter were to ſpeak Greek, he would ſpeak as Plato has written; ſo we may ſay of this language of Milton—that, if Jupiter

Digitized by Google

were to ſpeak Engliſh, he would expreſs himſelf in this manner. The paſſage is exceeding beautiful in every reſpect; but all readers of taſte will acknowledge, that the ſtyle of it is much raiſed by the expreſſion —*unleſs the goddeſs*, an elliptical expreſſion, unuſual in our language, though common enough in Greek and Latin. But if we were to fill it up and ſay, *unleſs thou beeſt the goddeſs;* how flat and inſipid would it make the compoſition, compared with what it is.

I will mention another idiom of conſtruction in Milton, and which, as far as I know, is neither Greek nor Latin, but intirely Milton's own, and which, I think, does more violence to the language than any other that he has uſed. It is where he deſcribes Eve juſt parting from her huſband to go to work by herſelf in the garden, which expoſed her to the temptation of the devil. As this is the laſt deſcription of her in a ſtate of innocence, Milton has beſtowed upon her the richeſt colours of his poetry, and has compared her to every thing moſt beautiful of the kind that is to be found in the

Digitized by Google

antient fable, with which he found it neceſſary to adorn even his Chriſtian poem.

Thus ſaying, from her huſband's hand her hand
Soft ſhe withdrew, and like a Wood-nymph light
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,
Betook her to the groves; but Delia's ſelf
In gait ſurpaſs'd and goddeſs-like deport;
Though not, as ſhe, with bow and quiver arm'd,
But with ſuch gard'ning tools as art, yet rude,
Guiltleſs of fire, had form'd, or angels brought.
To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorn'd,
Likeſt ſhe ſeem'd (Pomona, when ſhe fled
Vertumnus), or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proſerpina from Jove. b. 9. v. 385.

This expreſſion, *virgin of Proſerpina*, is certainly not common Engliſh, and many will deny it to be Engliſh at all; but let any man try to expreſs the ſame thought otherwiſe, and he will be convinced how much Milton has raiſed and ennobled his ſtyle by an idiom ſo uncommon, but which is, notwithſtanding, ſufficiently intelligible.

The laſt example I ſhall give from Milton of this kind of figure, is one by which the natural conſtruction of the language is not altered, but interrupted and broken in a very unuſual way. It is in the Comus, where the lady ſitting inchanted, and endeavouring to riſe, Comus ſays to her,

Digitized by Google

> Nay, lady, ſit: if I but wave this wand,
> Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaſter,
> And you a ſtatue; or, as Daphne was,
> Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

where, inſtead of ſaying *root-bound, as Daphne was, that fled Apollo*, he throws in *root-bound* into the middle, betwixt the antecedent and the relative, a trajection altogether unuſual in our language, but which muſt be allowed both to vary and raiſe the ſtyle; and as the connection is not ſo remote as to make the language obſcure, I think it may not only be tolerated, but praiſed.

This way of varying the ſtyle is a figure very uſual both in Greek and Latin. For, though thoſe languages admitted of very much greater variety of compoſition than ours; yet, even among them, there were certain tranſpoſitions, not only of ſingle words, but of the members of ſentences, which were unuſual. Theſe were marked by their critics, and denoted by the name of *hyperbaton*; a figure much uſed by the beſt authors, by Thucydides more than any, and I think too much; but by Demoſthenes more moderately, though Longinus ſeems to think

Digitized by Google

that even he has exceeded in the uſe of it *. But a much better critic than he, I mean the Halicarnaſſian, does not find fault with him in that reſpect; and it is certainly one of the principal means by which he has raiſed a ſtyle of common words ſo much above common ſpeech. It is a figure which raiſes and diverſifies ſtyle perhaps more than any other; and though the effects of it be felt by every man of good natural taſte, it is only the critic who knows the cauſe. Thus the difference betwixt the Virgilian verſe and the verſes of Cicero, or even of Lucretius, in the didactic part of his poem, is acknowledged by every man of the leaſt taſte; but it is only the man who has ſtudied the rules of writing who knows that it is owing chiefly to the uſe of the hyperbaton †.

* De Subl. §. 22.

† See what I have further ſaid upon this ſubject, vol. 2. p. 584.

Some may think, that thoſe tranſpoſitions of words, which I dignify with the name of a figure, were no more than the ordinary arrangement of words in thoſe learned languages, however extraordinary it may appear to us. Even in the days of the Halicarnaſſian, as he informs us in

Digitized by Google

Thus much I have thought proper to ſay of figures of conſtruction—a little out of a great deal that might be ſaid upon the ſubject—but enough, I hope, to excite my reader's curioſity to look into the antient maſters of art who have treated of this part of ſtyle, ſuch as Dionyſius the Halicarnaſſian, Cicero, and Quintilian. And, if he would have a complete pattern for this kind of figurative ſtyle, let him go to Thucydides, who has diverſified his compoſition by

his treatiſe upon Thucydides, *c.* 51. *p.* 262. *vol.* 2. *edit. Hudſoni*, there were ſome who thought that the ſtyle of Thucydides, which, as I have ſaid, abounds ſo much with this figure, was the uſual ſtyle of his age. But the Halicarnaſſian ſhews the contrary, by appealing to the writings of other authors contemporary with him. And if we would be convinced that the ſtyle of Demoſthenes, though not near ſo much varied and adorned by this figure, was not the common language of his time, we need only compare his public orations, ſuch as his Philippics, his Olynthiacs, and his oration περὶ στεφάνου, with his orations in private cauſes, or with the decrees of the ſenate and people of Athens, which are inſerted in ſome of his harangues; and we ſhall immediately perceive the difference betwixt his artificial high-raiſed ſtyle, and the common language of buſineſs, or of converſation, at that time in Athens; and we ſhall alſo perceive, that it is the more or leſs frequent uſe of the hyperbaton that chiefly makes the difference.

Digitized by Google

every figure of words that can be imagined, many more than the grammarians or rhetoricians have given names to *.

* The Halicarnaſſian has written two treatiſes upon Thucydides's character of ſtyle and his idioms; not in the epidictic manner, as he ſays, that is, in the way of a popular oration, but in the didactic manner, which he underſtood as well as any body, being by profeſſion a teacher of rhetoric in Rome. He has therefore explained, by examples taken from Thucydides's hiſtory, whatever he has ſaid of his ſtyle, which makes the work exceedingly inſtructive to thoſe who deſire to know accurately all the different forms of compoſition. He has enlarged particularly upon the figures relating to the ſyntax, or grammatical ſtructure of the words, in which Thucydides abounds more than any other writer in proſe; for he moulds and faſhions the language in every way that can be conceived, in order to remove his ſtyle, as far as poſſible, from common ſpeech, uſing nouns ſometimes for verbs, and, *vice verſa*, verbs for nouns, active verbs for paſſive, and paſſive for active, and ſingular and plural numbers interchangeably, making his caſes and genders refer, ſometimes to the things ſignified, ſometimes to the word ſignifying them, ſometimes making perſons ſtand for things, at other times things for perſons; and in theſe, and other ways which the Halicarnaſſian enumerates, torturing, as it were, the words, in order to form a ſtyle peculiar to himſelf, and exceedingly different from that of any other writer. See vol. 2. of the Halicarnaſſian's works, *p.* 215. *edit. Hudſon.* All this is much enlarged upon in

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VII.

Recapitulation.—Of the figures by which the ſenſe is varied.—Theſe divided into three kinds.—Of the firſt is Exclamation—Hyperbole—Epithet—Proſopopœia—And Deſcription.

STYLE, as we have ſaid, conſiſts of two parts, words conſidered ſingly, and the compoſition of theſe words. We have ſeen how ſingle words may be varied both as to the ſound and the meaning; we have ſeen alſo that, in compoſition, the ſame words may be varied with reſpect to the ſound, and likewiſe that the grammatical ſtructure of the ſpeech may be changed, the words ſtill continuing the ſame. It

the firſt treatiſe, and, as I have ſaid, illuſtrated by examples. But, in the ſecond, he not only examines the ſtyle, but the matter of this author moſt accurately. And, upon the whole, it is the fineſt piece of criticiſm, and, at the ſame time, the faireſt I ever read; for he praiſes as fully and freely as he cenſures.

Digitized by Google

now remains to ſhow how the ſtyle may be varied by a change both of the words and the meaning, the ſubject matter, however, ſtill continuing the ſame, and the order of treating it. This is done by what is called *figures of the ſenſe or meaning* *. Theſe make ſo much the nobler part of ornamented compoſition, by how much the meaning is more excellent than the words.

Figures of this kind, as they vary the compoſition more than any other, are in number ſo many, that Quintilian has ſaid they are innumerable †. We muſt try, however, whether they cannot be reduced to certain heads or claſſes, ſo that we may treat of them in order and method. And it appears to me, that they may be properly divided into three kinds: *Firſt*, ſuch as expreſs ſome feeling or emotion of the mind; *ſecondly*, ſuch as expreſs the character or manners of the ſpeaker or writer; and, *thirdly*, ſuch as, without expreſſing

* Σχηματα τῆς διανοιας, in oppoſition to the σχηματα τῆς λεξεως, of which we have already treated.

† Pag. 758. *edit. Burmanni.*

Digitized by Google

either of theſe, give a turn and form to the thought and expreſſion, different from what is uſual in common ſpeech. Under one or other of theſe heads may be ranked, as I imagine, every figure of this kind that can be deviſed.

By the firſt kind of theſe, the ſtyle is made *pathetic*; by which I do not mean the exciting of grief only, but of every other paſſion or affection of the human mind, ſuch as joy, hope, fear, and the like. Of this ſort is a very ſtrong figure, much more uſed in modern writing than in antient; I mean *exclamation*, by which a ſpeaker or writer ſtarts from his ſubject, and breaks out into ſome rapturous expreſſion of admiration, aſtoniſhment, or whatever other paſſion moves them. I do not remember one example of it in Homer or Demoſthenes. Cicero, who is certainly not ſo correct a writer as either of theſe, abounds with it; as in the oration for Milo—'O fruſtra ſuſcepti mei labores! 'O cogitationes inanes meæ! &c. *.' Again, in the ſame oration—'O me miſerum! O

* Cap. 34.

Digitized by Google

'infelicem *!' And a little after—'O ter-'ram illam beatam, quæ hunc virum exce-'perit †!'—Our Milton has but few of them: I remember one, which muſt be allowed to be upon a very proper occaſion. It is in the ſong of the angels celebrating the love of the Son of God, when he under-took to die for men:

——O! unexampled love!
Love no where to be found leſs than divine!
Par. Loſt, b. 3. v. 410.

But, among our more modern authors, it is become ſo common, that the printers have invented a punctuation for it, which they call *punctum admirationis*.

Another figure of this kind, and which is likewiſe much more common in modern than in antient writing, is *hyperbole*, by which a thing is either magnified or diminiſhed beyond what it really is. From this definition of it, it muſt be evident, that it is not much uſed by the chaſte writers of antiquity; by the proſe-writers, who deſerve that character, not at all; and by their

* Cap. 37. † Ib. 38.

Digitized by Google

poets but very ſparingly. Homer has but few of them; though, if we were to judge of his ſtyle by that of his tranſlator, we ſhould imagine that he uſed a great many, and ſome of them moſt violent and outrageous *. Virgil has many more, and ſome

* There are, I believe, many Engliſh readers, who think Mr. Pope's tranſlation of the Iliad a finer poem than the original. This is a point that I will not diſpute with thoſe gentlemen; but I think I ſhall be able to convince them by an example or two, that, though the ſtyle of the tranſlation may be finer than that of the original, it is of a different kind, particularly with reſpect to the uſe of this figure of hyperbole. Achilles ſays in the firſt Iliad, that the Greeks ſhall then find the want of him, when many ſhall fall under Hector the homicide.

——ἵντ' ἂν πολλοὶ ὑφ' Ἕκτορος ἀνδροφόνοιο
Θνησκοντες πίπτωσι. v. 242.

This expreſſion is very ſimple; but ſee how it is ſwelled in the tranſlation:

When fluſh'd with ſlaughter, Hector comes to ſpread
The purpled ſhore with mountains of the dead. v. 319.

This may be a better ſtyle, but it is certainly different. Again, Homer deſcribing a battle, ſays, that the ground flowed with blood,

Ῥεε δ' αἱματι γαια,

which is no hyperbole, but is literally true of every bloody battle, eſpecially of ſuch battles as the antient, in which men, drawn up in cloſe and deep order, were en-

Digitized by Google

of them very violent, ſuch as where he makes one of his heroes lift a ſtone,

'Haud partem exiguam montis.'

gaged hand to hand. But ſee what a garagantua image Mr. Pope has made of this ſimple deſcription:

With ſtreaming blood the ſlippery fields are dy'd,
And ſlaughter'd heroes ſwell the dreadful tide.

This is an hyperbole with a witneſs; and, if it had come from the pen of a leſs celebrated poet, we ſhould have ſaid, that it was not tranſlating Homer, but parodying, or rather burleſquing him.

But, though ſome ſevere critics may think that he has not properly tranſlated Homer, I think it is impoſſible to deny, that he has parodied Virgil exceedingly well in his Dunciad. As where he ſays, ſpeaking of Curle, and the figures of that piece of tapeſtry which was one of the prizes in his *high heroic games*,

Himſelf among the ſtoried chiefs he ſpies,
As from the blanket, high in air he flies.

And again, ſpeaking of a ſcribbler of the name of Ward,

From the ſtrong fate of drams if thou gett'ſt free,
Another Durphy, Ward, ſhall ſing in thee:
Thee ſhall each ale-houſe, thee each gill-houſe mourn,
And anſwering gin-ſhops ſow'rer ſighs return.

Theſe parodies, I think, are incomparable. But perhaps it is not given by Nature to the ſame man to excel both in the *heroic* and the *mock-heroic*, nor in tragedy and comedy, according to the opinion of the antients; for, among them, the ſame poet never attempted both. But,

Digitized by Google

and where he makes Æneas, deſcribing a great ſea, which lifted their ſhips very high, ſay,

——' Rorantia vidimus aſtra.'

In Engliſh, and more ſtill in French, common converſation is moſt unnaturally ſwelled, and raiſed by the intemperate uſe of this figure, and from thence it has crept into our writings; ſo that a ſtyle, perfectly chaſte and correct in this reſpect, is now very rarely to be found. But our great Milton has in this, as well as in other things, faithfully copied his maſters, the antients. For, though his poetical ſtyle is, in many paſſages, by far the moſt ſublime we have in Engliſh; yet it has leſs froth or bombaſt than any modern compoſition of the kind that I know. I have elſewhere inſtanced ſome expreſſions that ſhew the modeſty of his ſtyle, ſuch as,

Battle dangerous to leſs than Gods;

beſides the mock-heroic, he excelled alſo in ſatire; nor do I think any thing keener of that kind is to be found in any author antient or modern. And it muſt alſo be acknowledged, that he has carried the rhyming verſification, in Engliſh, to the higheſt point of perfection. And, in his latter works, after he had acquired ſome ſcience and philoſophy, there is a cloſeneſs and ſtrength of expreſſion that is rarely to be found in any poet, antient or modern.

Digitized by Google

and,

Nor appeared less than arch-angel ruined.

And I will here give only one instance more: It is where he describes the rising of the council of the devils in Pondæmonium, the noise of which a less correct and judicious author would have compared to loud thunder; but he compares it to thunder heard at a distance:

Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote; Book 2. v. 476.

which is a sound not loud or strong, but awful, and very like that produced by the movement of a great multitude.

Among the figures of this kind, I reckon the use of epithets, by which we commonly express our admiration, love, hatred, or aversion, to any person or thing, and by which we denominate or characterize, in a particular manner, any person or thing. They are much used by the antients in their poetry, and they are the distinguishing characteristic of the poetic style among

Digitized by Google

them *. But they are ſparingly uſed by their beſt proſe-writers, even by their orators; whereas, among us, the *epithetical* ſtyle is become ſo common, as to infect even our ordinary converſation; and, as for our oratory, it makes the greateſt part of it. And,

* Homer, in the addreſſes of his ſpeeches, has often joined ſeveral epithets together, as

Διογενες Λαερτιαδη πολυμηχαν' Οδυσσευ.

By ſuch magnificent compellations he has raiſed the dignity both of his heroes and his ſtyle. Milton in this, as in other things, has imitated him; he makes Beelzebub addreſs Satan in this manner:

O prince! O chief of many throned powers,
That led th' embattled ſeraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds
Fearleſs, endanger'd heaven's perpetual King,
And put to proof his high ſupremacy.
Book i. v. 128.

Adam accoſts Eve thus:

Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve:
Book ix. v. 291.

And ſhe him in theſe words:

Offspring of heaven and earth, and all earth's lord.
Ib. 273.

Such a ſtyle as this, Milton thought

——Juſtly gives heroic name
To perſon, or to poem.—— Ib. v. 40.

Digitized by Google

as all our writings, of every kind, have ſomething of the poetical or rhetorical caſt, this ſtyle has become univerſally predominant.

The *Proſopopœia* is a figure likewiſe uſed in the pathetic ſtyle: By it we introduce perſonages that are not preſent, and ſometimes ſuch as are no longer exiſting, nay, inanimate things, and give them voice and ſpeech for the purpoſe of exciting paſſions of different kinds in the hearer. It is a ſtrong figure, and belonging more to poetry than oratory; it is, however, uſed by the orators, and particularly by Cicero, who ſometimes even perſonifies inanimate things, which is altogether poetical, nor do I remember that it is practiſed by any Greek orator; but Cicero has uſed it in ſundry paſſages of his orations, particularly in the oration for Milo, where he addreſſes the Alban groves and altars in this manner: 'Vos enim jam, Albani Tumuli atque Luci, vos, inquam, imploro atque teſtor, voſque Albanorum dirutæ aræ*.'

* Pro Milone, c. 31.

Digitized by Google

Our poetry is full of addreſſes of this kind to inanimate things; and if not too frequent, and if introduced upon proper occaſions, they have a very good effect. There is a beautiful proſopopœia of this kind in the *Crito* of Plato, who may be reckoned a poet as well as a philoſopher. It is in that part of the dialogue where Socrates makes a perſonage of the laws and community of Athens, and introduces them arguing againſt his eſcape out of priſon, which Crito had adviſed, and the argument is carried on by way of dialogue betwixt Socrates and them for ſeveral pages *. In the oration which he has given us, in the *Menexenus*, upon thoſe Athenians, who died fighting for their country, he has likewiſe uſed this figure very ſucceſsfully, by raiſing from the dead thoſe whom he was praiſing, and making them give very proper exhortations to the children they had left behind them: See the paſſage quoted and commended by the Halicarnaſſian †.

* Plat. opera, Ficini, p. 37.

† Περὶ τῆς δεινότητος τῦ Δημοσθένους, c. 30.

Digitized by Google

The laſt figure of this kind I ſhall mention, is, what the Greek maſters of the art call διατυπωσις, by which we particularly deſcribe any thing with all its circumſtances; and it is a figure which, more than any other, if properly uſed, moves the mind, and excites paſſion. For this purpoſe, it is much more proper than exclamation, hyperbole, or ſtrong epithets; becauſe it preſents to us the object itſelf, and, as it were, ſets before our eyes whatever is intended to excite our pity, terror, anger, indignation, or whatever other paſſion. This figure is chiefly poetical; for poetry is a kind of painting, and a particular deſcription of any thing, being ſuch as might be painted, is not improperly called a picture of that thing; and, accordingly, it is very much uſed by the poets, and particularly Homer *. It is alſo uſed properly by the orator, when he has

* Ἀνδρας μεν κτεινουσι, πολιν δε τε πυρ ἀμαθυνει·
Τεκνα δε τ' ἀλλοι ἀγουσι, βαθυζωνουστε γυναικας.

And again,

Δυσμορον. ὁυρα πατηρ Κρονιδης ἐπι γηραος ὀυδῳ
Ἀισῃ ἐν ἀργαλεῃ φθισει κακα πολλ' ἐπιδοντα,
Ὑιας τ' ὀλλυμενους, ἑλκυσθεισαστε θυγατρας,
Και θαλαμους κεραϊζομενους, καὶ νηπια τεκνα
Βαλλομενα ποτι γαιῃ ἐν ἀινῃ δηϊοτητι.

Digitized by Google

a mind to excite our paſſions. But, as the beſt kind of oratory perſuades more by argument than by paſſion, and therefore reaſons more than it deſcribes, we have little of this figure in Demoſthenes*, but a great deal of it in Cicero, who, in his orations, has given us many pictures, ſuch as that of Verres—'Stetit ſoleatus prætor populi 'Romani cum pallio purpureo, tunicaque

* In his oration againſt Æſchines, entitled, περὶ παραπρεσβειας, deſcribing the deſolation of the country of the Phocians by Philip, which he himſelf ſaw, and of which, he ſays, Æſchines was the cauſe, he ſpeaks of houſes demoliſhed, walls razed, a country diſpeopled of men fit for the purpoſes of life, with only a few women and children in it, and poor old men. In ſhort, ſays he, nobody can, by words, deſcribe the miſery that is now to be ſeen there. The ſcholar, however, will be pleaſed to read Demoſthenes's own words: Θεαμα δεινον, ω ἀνδρες Αθηναιοι καὶ ἐλεεινον· ὁτε γαρ ην, ἐπορευομεθα εἰς Δελφους, ἐξ ἀναγκης ἠν ὁραν ἡμιν παντα ταυτα· οικιας κατεσκαμμενας, τειχη περιηρημενα, χωραν ἐρημον τῶν ἐν ἡλικια, γυναια δε και παιδαρια ὀλιγα, καὶ πρεσβυτας ἀνθρωπους οἰκτρους· ὁλως δε οὐδ' αν εἰς ἐφικεσθαι δυναιτο τῳ λογῳ των ἐκει κακων νυν ὀντων. And the critic, in comparing this paſſage with a like deſcription in Homer, juſt now quoted, will be ſenſible of the difference betwixt poetical painting and oratorial deſcription. Demoſthenes has given us little more than the ſubject of the picture, with ſome of the great outlines; but Homer has filled up the piece with every ſtriking circumſtance that could occur to the imagination of a painter.

Digitized by Google

'talari, muliercula nixus in littore*.' And another of Lucius Piſo, much longer and more remarkable †.

* In Verrem, lib. v. p. 446. edit. in uſum Delphini.

† 'Meminiſtine, cœnum, cum ad te quinta fere hora 'cum C. Piſone veniſſem, neſcio quo e gurguſtio te pro-'dire, involuto capite, ſoleatum? Et cum iſto ore fœti-'do teterrimam nobis popinam inhalâſſes, excuſatione te 'uti valetudinis, quod diceres, vinolentis te quibuſdam 'medicaminibus ſolere curari? Quam nos cauſam cùm 'accepiſſemus, (quid enim facere poteramus?) pauliſper 'ſtetimus in illo ganearum tuarum nidore atque fumo; 'unde tu nos, cum improbiſſimè reſpondendo, tum tur-'piſſimè eructando, ejeciſti. Idem illo fere biduo pro-'ductus in concionem ab eo, cui ſic æquatum præbebas 'conſulatum tuum, cùm eſſes interrogatus, quid ſenti-'res de conſulatu meo; gravis auctor, Calatinus credo 'aliquis, aut Africanus, aut Maximus, et non Cæſoninus 'Semiplacentinus Calventius, reſpondes, altero ad fron-'tem ſublato, altero ad mentum depreſſo ſupercilio, 'crudelitatem tibi non placere;' in L. Piſonem, c. 6. This is painting indeed; but it is Dutch painting: And though it might have been proper enough in a comic poet, it was not ſuitable to the dignity of an orator, a conſular orator too, and then the firſt ſenator in Rome. But, with Cicero's great talents, there was a levity of wit mixed, which he never could ſhake off, and which made Cato ſay, upon hearing his oration for Lucius Muræna, made when he was actually conſul, wherein he was witty upon the ſtoical philoſophy—*quàm ridiculum conſulem habemus.*

Digitized by Google

For this, and ſuch like deſcriptions, I am perſuaded Cicero was much praiſed and clapped by his countrymen; but I doubt whether the people of Athens, aſſembled, either to deliberate on public affairs, or to judge cauſes, would have borne to be entertained in that way by their orators. For, though they loved poetry, and particularly that of the theatre, more perhaps than any people ever did; yet their taſte was ſo correct, that I do not believe they could have endured to ſee it mixed with their ſerious buſineſs.

As to other kinds of ſtyle, ſuch as the hiſtoric or didactic, this figure does not at all belong to them; and therefore, whenever we ſee in any ſuch compoſition a particular deſcription tending to move the paſſions, we ought to conſider it as out of the ſtyle of the work, and belonging to poetry or rhetoric: I ſay, *tending to move the paſſions;* for, if it be a deſcription of any thing, as a ſubject of art or ſcience, let it be ever ſo particular, it may be very properly inſerted, even in hiſtory; and as to works of the didactic kind, ſuch deſcrip-

Digitized by Google

tions properly belong to them. The account, therefore, given by Thucydides of the plague in Athens, about the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, though very accurate, and almost as circumstantial as a physician could have given it, is a very proper part of his history.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

Of the ſecond kind of Compoſition, figured with reſpect to the ſenſe, viz. by the imitation of characters.—The difference betwixt this kind of ſtyle and the pathetic.—The difference betwixt deſcribing and imitating a character.—The Ethic ſtyle belongs both to Poetry and Rhetoric, but in different reſpects.

I Come now to ſpeak of the ſecond way in which the ſenſe is figured, namely, by expreſſing the character of the ſpeaker or writer. The effect of this turn given to the compoſition is felt by every reader of any taſte or judgment; but the nature of the thing appears to me to be little underſtood by our modern critics; at leaſt I do not know any modern work of criticiſm in which it is treated of as a matter of art or ſcience. Among the antients, it was well

Digitized by Google

known under the name of the τὸ ἠθικὸν*, and in Latin *morata oratio* †; and is treated of by them in every book which they have written upon the ſubject of rhetoric or poetry; but, as it is ſo little underſtood among us, it will be neceſſary to explain the nature of it at ſome length.

And, firſt, it is to be carefully diſtinguiſhed from the expreſſion of paſſion, of

* In the Scholia upon the antient Greek authors, where any thing is ſaid of this kind, it is obſerved by the Scholiaſt to be ἠθικῶς, or ἐν ἤθει, λεγόμενον.

† In this ſenſe Horace uſes the word *morata* when he ſays,

——Specioſa locis, morataque recte
Fabula, nullius veneris, ſine pondere et uſu,
Valdius oblectat populum, meliuſque moratur,
Quam verſus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ.
Ar. Poët.

where the reader, not learned, would imagine, that by *Fabula recte morata*, was meant a *fable of good moral*; but it is a fable or dramatic piece, in which character and manners are properly repreſented. What we would call the morals of the piece, are denoted by the *ſpecioſa locis*, which ſignifies, that the common topics, the ſubject of which was almoſt always ſomething moral and uſeful in life, were there well handled.

Digitized by Google

which we have treated in the preceeding chapter. For though a ſpeaker or writer may ſhew himſelf to be full of anger, grief, indignation, or any other paſſion, he does not for that ſpeak or write *ethically*, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, becauſe *character* and *paſſion* are two things quite different; and, accordingly, Ariſtotle, in his Poetics, has accurately diſtinguiſhed them: Character, ſays he, is that which directs us in our choice of actions, and makes us be denominated ſuch or ſuch a man, that is, good or bad, juſt or unjuſt, and the like. By paſſion, on the other hand, we grieve or rejoice, hope or fear, and, in ſhort, are liable to every emotion or alteration of the mind *.

Secondly, There is a great difference between *deſcribing* a character and *repreſenting* it; and the one may be intirely without the

* The words of Ariſtotle are, τα δε ηθη, καθ' ἁ ποιους τινας ειναι φαμεν τους πραττοντας. And again, ἐστι δε ηθος μεν το τοιουτον, ὁ δηλοῖ την προαιρεσιν, ὁποια τις ἐστιν, εν οἰς μη ἐστι δηλον ἡ προαιρειται, ἡ φευγει ὁ λογος. Poet. c. 6.

Digitized by Google

other. A poet may repreſent characters very well without deſcribing any; and my Lord Shaftſbury has very well obſerved, that, though Homer has repreſented or imitated characters exceedingly well, he has deſcribed none *. And again, an hiſtorian may deſcribe characters very well, as my Lord Clarendon has done, and yet imitate none. But what is the difference betwixt the two? It is this: When I deſcribe a character, I only *tell* what it is; whereas, when I repreſent it, I *ſhew* or *exhibit* what it is. This diſtinction will be perfectly underſtood with reſpect to the body and its operations. If I ſay, that a man made ſuch and ſuch motions or geſtures, looked ſo and ſo, and ſpoke with ſuch a tone of voice; though I deſcribe all this ever ſo accurately and particularly, ſtill I do but *deſcribe;* but if I am a mimic, and move, look, and ſpeak as he

* There is, however, one paſſage in the Iliad, where Homer has deſcribed the character of his hero from the mouth of Patroclus:

Ουδε γλυκυθυμος ἀνηρ ην, ὑδ' ἀγαποφρων,
Ἀλλα μαλ' εμμεμαως.——

Digitized by Google

does, then I *repreſent* or *imitate* him, and become, as it were, that man*.

According to this account of the matter, when an author either exhibits himſelf un-

* This is the nature of imitation, as deſcribed by Plato in a paſſage of the third book de Republica, too long to be here tranſcribed, but of which I will give the ſubſtance in Engliſh, becauſe it further explains the nature of imitation, and of that kind of ſtyle which I call Ethic. Plato, in this paſſage, after having ſhewn what the ſubject ſhould be of the poetical fables, and mythological tales, which were to be taught to children in his commonwealth, comes next to explain in what manner the ſubject was to be handled in ſuch fables or tales; and he begins with laying it down, that whatever was ſaid by poets or mythologiſts, was a narrative of what had been, what was, or what would be; and this narrative was either ſimple, or by imitation, or both ways. The Interloquutor Adimantus did not underſtand this laſt, and deſired an explanation of it: 'I am, it would ſeem, ſays Socrates, a ridiculous teacher; and I muſt do, I find, as thoſe do who have not learned the art of ſpeaking; I muſt explain the thing, not in whole, but in parts, and make you conceive what I mean by examples. You remember the beginning of the Iliad, where the poet introduces Chryſes the prieſt, deſiring the ranſom of his daughter; and, when he could not obtain it, praying to the god Apollo to avenge him of the Greeks for the refuſal. In this narrative, down to theſe lines,

——Και ἱλάσσετο πάντας Ἀχαιούς,
Ἀτρεΐδα δὲ μάλιστα, δύω κοσμήτορε λαῶν,

Digitized by Google

der a certain character, or introduces perſons into his piece who ſo exhibit themſelves, then does he write in the ſtyle I am deſcribing, and is what I would call an *ethic writer*. But, if there is no character repre-

the poet ſpeaks himſelf, and there is no change of perſon in the narrative; but the ſame perſon, namely, Homer, continues to narrate. But, after this, he ſpeaks not as Homer, but as Chryſes the prieſt, endeavouring, as much as he can, to make us forget him, and attend only to the prieſt; and in theſe two ways the narrative goes on through the whole Iliad and Odyſſey.' The firſt of theſe ways, when the poet appears, and narrates *in his own perſon*, I call *ſimple narrative*; but, *when he becomes another*, and ſpeaks not as Homer, but as that other, I call it *narrative by imitation*; becauſe the poet, in that caſe, imitates, as much as he can, the perſon whom he introduces as ſpeaking. And he may be ſaid to be a mimic, with as much propriety as a man is ſo called, who imitates the figure, geſture, or voice of another. If the poet never diſappeared himſelf, but went on narrating that ſuch or ſuch things were done or ſaid, then would the whole poem be ſimple narrative; but if, on the other hand, the poet never appeared at all himſelf, but the whole ſtory was told by other perſons, introduced as ſpeakers, then would the whole be imitation: And this is the caſe, ſays Plato, of tragic and comic poetry; whereas the former is the nature of Dithyrambic poetry. And, laſtly, if the ſtory is told partly by the poet himſelf, and partly by other ſpeakers, then is the poem mixed of plain narrative, and of imitation; and of this kind are the Iliad and Odyſſey.

Digitized by Google

ſented in his piece, neither belonging to himſelf, nor to any other perſon, then, whatever other excellence there may be in his work, there is no *character* or manners in it. And it is not enough, that the perſons he introduces as acting, may ſhew their characters by their actions; for, unleſs they ſhew them by ſpeaking, it is not ſuch character as I mean, which muſt be exhibited by ſpeeches, not by actions.

This kind of ſtyle belongs both to poetry and oratory, but in different reſpects. The orator ought to repreſent himſelf as a good man, a lover of truth, juſt, humane, and benevolent, eſpecially to thoſe to whom he addreſſes himſelf*. But, if he introduces any other perſons as ſpeaking, he

* The character of the orator is one of the three methods of perſuaſion mentioned by Ariſtotle, in the beginning of his books of rhetoric. We perſuade, ſays he, by arguments, drawn either from the nature of the ſubject, from the paſſions of the hearers, or from the character of the ſpeaker; lib. 1. c. 2. This ſhews the neceſſity of every orator aſſuming a proper character, which is often more convincing with the people than either of the other two. For the people ſometimes may not underſtand the beſt arguments, and the ſubject may not

Digitized by Google

need not make them exhibit any character. The poet, on the other hand, needs never appear in his own piece; and Homer, I think, has been very juſtly praiſed for never ſo appearing; but the perſons he introduces muſt neceſſarily have a character, which they ought to ſhew by their ſpeaking, otherwiſe his piece is very imperfect. And from this difference proceeds another, that, though many bad and wicked characters may be *deſcribed* in an oration, the character *repreſented* in it, being that of the orator himſelf, is always a good character; whereas, the characters repreſented by the

admit of much paſſion. But all men will be diſpoſed to believe what a good man, and a well-wiſher of theirs, tells them. An orator, therefore, though he be not ſtrong in argument, and though he have not the faculty of moving the paſſions; yet, if he can ſpeak ἠθικῶς, is not to be deſpiſed: And the poſſeſſing this talent was of the greateſt uſe to the antient orator, not only in his deliberative orations, but in his judicial; for, as the pleadings were by the parties themſelves, at leaſt in Athens, though the ſpeeches were ſometimes compoſed by others, it was proper that the party ſhould aſſume a character throughout the whole oration, and particularly in the narrative, which is not ſo neceſſary for our pleaders to do.

Digitized by Google

poet may be, and often are, very bad characters.

As poetry is an art imitative of characters, as well as of actions, the poets ought, above all others, to excell in this figure of ſtyle; and, accordingly, Homer, the father of poetry, is moſt eminent in it. All the characters he has imitated are of the heroic kind, excepting only one ridiculous perſonage, that he has but once exhibited, I mean *Therſites*. But he has contrived, notwithſtanding, to give them a great variety; for Achilles, Ajax, Hector, Diomede, &c. are all heroes, but very different from one another. Virgil, it has been obſerved, has not ſuch a variety; and indeed the truth is, that he has only three, Æneas, Turnus, and Dido; whereas we may reckon in Homer a dozen that are diſtinctly characterized. Milton's ſubject is particularly unfortunate in this reſpect; for it is ſuch as affords him only one character fit for poetry. His divine perſonages are ſuch as cannot have characters, like thoſe of Homer's deities, who are as much characterized as his heroes: And Adam and Eve, while in their

Digitized by Google

ſtate of perfection, can hardly be conſidered as human characters; and, after their fall, the part they act is very ſhort; ſo that there remains only Satan, of whom he indeed has made a very fine poetic perſonage, but not without doing ſome violence to his character as devil. For he has not made him perfectly bad, which would not have been a character ſo fit for poetry; but he has mixed with his deviliſh qualities ſome remorſe and feeling of what goodneſs is; and, by doing ſo, he has brought the character nearer to human.

Milton appears to have been ſenſible of this defect of his ſubject; and, accordingly, he has been at great pains to ſupply it; for, in the council of the devils, in the ſecond book, he has exhibited different characters of them in very fine ſpeeches, the fineſt, in my opinion, that are to be found in Engliſh. But thoſe devils appear only there, and are no more ſeen; ſo that Satan may be truly ſaid to be his only character; for he is carried through the whole poem, and every where appears like himſelf, of which I ſhall give but one example out of

Digitized by Google

many. It is the end of his ſpeech, with which he concludes the debate in the council of Pandæmonium; where, after ſetting forth the dangers that any one muſt run who ſhould undertake the diſcovery of the new created world, he ſays,

> But I ſhould ill become this throne, O peers!
> And this imperial ſov'reignty, adorn'd
> With ſplendor, arm'd with power, if ought propos'd
> And judg'd of public moment, in the ſhape
> Of difficulty or danger, could deter
> Me from attempting. Wherefore do I aſſume
> Theſe royalties, and not refuſe to reign,
> Refuſing to accept as great a ſhare
> Of hazard as of honour, due alike
> To him who reigns, and ſo much to him due
> Of hazard more, as he above the reſt
> High honour'd ſits? Go therefore, mighty pow'rs,
> Terror of Heav'n, though fall'n, intend at home,
> While here ſhall be our home, what beſt may eaſe
> The preſent miſery, and render hell
> More tolerable: If there be cure or charm
> To reſpite or deceive, or ſlack the pain
> Of this ill manſion; intermit no watch
> Againſt a wakeful foe, while I abroad,
> Thro' all the coaſts of dark deſtruction, ſeek
> Deliv'rance for us all: This enterprize
> None ſhall partake with me.——
>
> Book ii. v. 445. & ſeqq.

Digitized by Google

The whole paſſage is wonderfully beautiful in every reſpect. But the reaſon why I have quoted it is, to ſhew how he ſupports Satan's

Monarchal pride, conſcious of higheſt worth,

as he expreſſes it. In the firſt of theſe lines I have no doubt but he had in view the ſpeech of Sarpedon in Homer; but he only took the hint from that poet; and to ſhew the learned reader how far he is from a ſervile imitator, even of Homer, I have tranſcribed the paſſage below *.

* Γλαυκε, τιη δη νωϊ τετιμημεσθα μαλιστα
Εδρη τε, κρεασιν τε, ἰδε πλειοις διπαισσιν,
Ε᾽ν Λυκιη, παντες δε θες ὡς ἰσορροωσι,
Και τεμενος νεμομεσθα μεγα Ξανθοιο παρ᾽ ὀχθας,
Καλον, φυταλιης καὶ ἀρουρης πυρεφορου;
Τω νυν χρη Λυκιοισι μετα πρωτοισιν ἑοντας
Εσταμεν, ἠδε μαχης παυστειρης ἀντιβολησαι.

Lib. μ. v. 310.

Here we may obſerve, that indeed the thought is Homer's; that a King, being moſt honoured, ſhould likewiſe expoſe himſelf moſt to danger. But Milton has given it ſo much of the rhetorical caſt, and dreſſed it ſo up with ſentences and enthymemas, after the manner of Demoſthenes, who, as I have ſaid elſewhere, was his model for ſpeeches, that Homer is hardly to be found in it.

Digitized by Google

As to characters of common life, they are finely imitated in Terence's comedies, where we have ordinary and natural characters repreſented, ſuch as give both pleaſure and profit to an intelligent ſpectator, not ſuch abſurd and ridiculous characters as thoſe of our comedy often are, affording nothing but laughter, and that only to the mere vulgar.

There is lately ſprung up among us a ſpecies of narrative poem, repreſenting likewiſe the characters of common life. It has the ſame relation to comedy that the epic has to tragedy, and differs from the epic in the ſame reſpect that comedy differs from tragedy; that is, in the actions and characters, both which are much nobler in the epic than in it. It is therefore, I think, a legitimate kind of poem; and, accordingly, we are told, Homer wrote one of that kind, called *Margites*, of which ſome lines are preſerved *. The reaſon why I mention it

* Ariſtotle, in his Ethics *ad Nicomachum*, *lib.* vi. *c.* 7. has given us the following paſſage of Homer's Margites:

Τον δ' ὐτ' ἀρ σκαπτηρα θεοι θεσαν, ὐτ' ἀροτηρα,
Ουτ' ἀλλως τι σοφον.

Digitized by Google

is, that we have, in Engliſh, a *poem* of that kind, (for ſo I will call it) which has more of character in it than any work, antient or modern, that I know. The work I mean is, the *Hiſtory of Tom Jones*, by Henry Fielding, which, as it has more perſonages brought into the ſtory than any thing of the poetic kind I have ever ſeen; ſo all thoſe perſonages have characters peculiar to them, in ſo much, that there is not even an hoſt or an hoſteſs upon the road, hardly a ſervant, who is not diſtinguiſhed in that way; in ſhort I never ſaw any thing that was ſo much animated, and, as I may ſay, *all alive* with characters and manners, as the Hiſtory of Tom Jones.

This configuration of ſtyle has not been ſo much explained, even by the antient authors, nor ſo accurately divided into its ſeveral ſpecies, as other figures have been:

a character very common in theſe days, but, it would ſeem, rare in thoſe antient times. And Plato, in the *Alcibiades* II. has preſerved another line of it:

Πολλα ὑπιστατο ἐργα, κακως δ' ὑπιστατο-φαντα;

a character likewiſe not uncommon now-a-days; but, I believe, not ſo common in thoſe times.

Digitized by Google

There is only one ſpecies of it that has been defined and explained. It is when the ſpeaker aſſumes a character and ſentiments different from his own. This figure is known by the name of *Irony*, which Socrates practiſed more than any man we have heard of, and it was the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of his ſtyle and manner. But there may be as many ſpecieſes of this figure, as there are different characters that may be repreſented by an author or ſpeaker, whether they be aſſumed characters, or his own natural character. If the ſubject were to be divided, and treated of in this manner, it would take in the definition and explanation of all the different characters of men—a thing very neceſſary to be known both by poet and orator. And accordingly, Ariſtotle, in his books of rhetoric, has ſpent ſeveral chapters upon that ſubject, which are a moſt valuable part of that valuable work. And Horace alſo, in his art of poetry, has ſome very fine lines upon the ſame ſubject. As, therefore, this work is ſo much better done to my hand, I will ſay no more of it, but will here conclude what I have to ſay upon this part of ſtyle.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IX.

The great variety of Compoſition illuſtrated by an example.—Of the third kind of figures of the ſenſe.—Some of theſe named, ſuch as Interrogation—Antitheſis—Simile—Allegory—Many more of ſuch figures have no name.—The uſe of them in compoſition.—Examples of them from Virgil's Georgics, and Dr. Armſtrong's Poem on Health.—Praiſe of that Poem.—Concluſion of what relates to the Figures of Speech.—Apology for the Author's being ſo minute in explaining them.

THE reader, who is not learned in the critical art, if he has had the patience to accompany me ſo far in what I have ſaid concerning all thoſe niceties of compoſition, will be ſurpriſed to find that there is ſo much variety in this matter; and he will be ſtill more ſurpriſed to be told, that the variety is

Digitized by Google

not yet exhauſted; and that, beſides all the ſeveral forms and figures of compoſition which I have explained, relating both to the ſenſe and the ſound, there remain others without name or number, which ſerve to vary and adorn the compoſition, as well as thoſe that have been already mentioned.

In order to help him to conceive this variety, I will take a period of ſome length, and ſhow him the different ways in which it may be compoſed. The example I ſhall uſe is a period that I have mentioned more than once before, viz. that of Milton in Satan's firſt ſpeech in the council of devils, in the ſecond book of Paradiſe Loſt; and I will take in the whole paſſage, containing an argument which ſhews, as much as any thing in the whole work, Milton's rhetorical faculty; for by it he endeavours to prove, that hell is, at leaſt in ſome reſpects, better than heaven:

Me tho' juſt right, and the fix'd laws of Heaven
Did firſt create your leader; next, free choice,
With what beſides, in council or in fight,
Hath been atchiev'd of merit; yet this loſs,
Thus far at leaſt recover'd, hath much more

Eſtabliſh'd in a ſafe unenvied throne,
Yielded with full conſent. The happier ſtate
In heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the higheſt place expoſes
Foremoſt to ſtand againſt the Thund'rer's aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greateſt ſhare
Of endleſs pain? Where there is then no good
For which to ſtrive, no ſtrife can grow up there
From faction; for none ſure will claim in hell
Precedence; none, whoſe portion is ſo ſmall
Of preſent pain, that with ambitious mind
Will covet more. With this advantage then
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in heav'n, we now return
To claim our juſt inheritance of old,
Surer to proſper than proſperity
Could have aſſur'd us; and by what beſt way,
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate: Who can adviſe, may ſpeak.

As every compoſition is made up of certain materials, let us conſider, *firſt*, of what materials the compoſition here is made. And theſe are the following propoſitions (for there is no need to analyſe it further): *1ſt*, I was created your leader, by the fixed laws of Heaven: *2dly*, I was likewiſe by you choſen for leader: *3dly*, This choice was confirmed by my atchievements: *4thly*, But I was liable to envy while in heaven: For,

Digitized by Google

5thly, there is envy in heaven, becauſe there is in it good for which to contend: But, *6thly*, There is no envy here in hell, becauſe there is no good to contend for. From theſe premiſes, the concluſion is drawn, that he was more eſtabliſhed in his throne, and they in a better condition, and ſurer to proſper than before their fall. Theſe materials may be put together in the following plain manner, without any figure or other ornament of language.

'Being created your leader, by juſt right, 'and Heaven's fixt laws, then by your free 'choice, and next by my own atchieve-'ments in battle and in council; I am fur-'ther eſtabliſhed in this right by the loſs 'we have ſuſtained, a loſs, at leaſt, ſo far re-'covered; for, by this loſs, I am delivered 'from the danger of envy, which attends 'dignity in heaven, but which cannot be 'here, where there is no good to contend 'for, and where the higheſt dignity only 'expoſes to the greateſt miſery. With the 'advantage, then, of greater union and 'firmer concord than can be in heaven, we'

Digitized by Google

'are in a better condition, and ſurer to 'proſper than we were before our fall.'

This is the plain ſenſe of the paſſage; but it will be ſomewhat ornamented, if it be turned in this way:

'What could have eſtabliſhed me more 'in my throne than this very loſs that we 'have ſuſtained, thus far, at leaſt, repair-'ed? Before, indeed, I was created your 'leader, by the fixt laws of Heaven. This 'creation was confirmed, firſt by your free 'election, next by my own atchievements 'in council and in battle; but ſtill I was 'in danger, from that envy which attends 'all ſuperior dignities in heaven. Now 'that is at an end; for who will envy him 'who is here condemned to ſuffer the 'greateſt ſhare of pain? And how can there 'be contention, when there is no good for 'which to contend? With the advantage, 'then, of ſo much greater unanimity and 'concord than we could enjoy in hea-'ven, let us return to claim our juſt inheri-'tance, being now aſſured to proſper more 'than proſperity could have aſſured us.'

Digitized by Google

Or thus, with a little more ornament, and more of the rhetorical caſt.

'As uſurpation, the want of the people's 'concurrence in the election of a monarch, 'and the defect of perſonal merit in the 'monarch himſelf, make a throne inſecure; 'ſo, on the other hand, nothing eſtabliſhes 'a throne more than juſt right and fixt 'laws, the free election of the people, and 'the atchievements of the monarch in coun-'cil and in battle. All theſe advantages I 'enjoy. But there is one thing which 'makes my throne ſtill more ſecure: What 'is that? It is this very loſs that we have 'ſuſtained; by which that envy which at-'tends ſuperior dignities in heaven is at an 'end. For who will here envy him who 'is condemned to ſuffer the greateſt miſery? 'With more unanimity, therefore, and firm 'concord than can be in heaven, let us de-'liberate how we are to repair our loſſes, 'thus far already recovered.'

Other turns might be given to this ſen-tence; but theſe will ſuffice to ſhew, *firſt*, how much more copious the language of

Digitized by Google

Milton is, and how much more rounded, compact, and nervous his compoſition is, than any that I, at leaſt, can give to this paſſage. *2do*, If there be ſo much variety in turning one ſingle argument, how much more muſt there be in the compoſition of a whole diſcourſe or oration, though the ſubſtance of the matter, and the order of treating it, ſtill continue the ſame? *Laſtly*, And, what is more to our preſent purpoſe, it may be obſerved, that all the variety is here produced, without uſing any of the figures, of which I have treated in the two preceeding chapters; for there is here neither the pathetic nor the ethic, nor any thing but the argument variouſly turned and figured. This then ſhews, that there are ways of figuring the ſenſe of a compoſition otherwiſe than either by paſſion or by manners; and it is of ſuch figures that I am now to treat.

Some of them have got names; and with theſe I ſhall begin. And, *firſt*, there is *Interrogation*, a figure uſed by Milton in this period, and likewiſe by me in the two laſt ways I have turned it. It is a figure

Digitized by Google

that ſerves to excite the attention, and gives life and ſpirit to the compoſition. It is, therefore, much uſed both by poets and orators, and particularly by Demoſthenes, who frequently throws pungent interrogations into the middle of his arguments and periods, by which he not only varies the meaning, but the ſound of his compoſition, and often much inforces the ſenſe and argument. It is a figure that is likewiſe commonly uſed in ordinary converſation eſpecially when we argue; for it belongs more to argument than to narrative; and therefore it is little uſed by hiſtorians.

Another figure, likewiſe belonging more to argument than to narrative, is *Antitheſis*; a figure I have already mentioned among the figures of conſtruction. It is alſo a lively figure, which, by oppoſing things to one another, throws greater light upon both. It is a figure alſo of pleaſant ſound; for, at the ſame time that it makes an oppoſition in the ſenſe, it produces a ſimilarity in the ſtructure of the words; and, when joined with ſome other figures abovementioned, ſuch as the Paronomaſia, and

Digitized by Google

like endings, as it ſometimes happens*, it makes the ſtyle altogether panegyrical, and even theatrical. It is much uſed by modern authors, particularly by thoſe who are thought to write ſmartly and wittily; for it is the figure of wit, as I ſhall ſhew, when I come to treat of that kind of ſtyle.

There is another figure of the kind we are now ſpeaking of, and which likewiſe has a name, and that is the *Simile*, of great

* Of this kind a great deal is to be found in Iſocrates; and in Plato too, when he affects to write rhetorically; as in his funeral oration in the Menexenus, where we have ſuch ſentences as the following: τὺς μὲν παιδευοντες κοσμιως, τὺς δὲ γηρωτροφουντες ἀξιως.—Again, νικησαντες μὲν τὺς πολεμιως, λυσαμενοι δὲ τὺς φιλως.—Again, τὺς μὲν τετελευτηκοτας ἱκανως ἐπαινεσει, τοις δὲ ζωσιν ἐυμενως παραινεσει —Further, πολιτεια ἀνθρωπων τροφος ἐστι, ἡ μὲν ἀγαθη ἀγαθων, μὴ καλη δὲ κακων; where we have altogether the Paronomaſia, like endings, the Antitheſis, and every other ſpecies of the Pariſoſis. But the frequent uſe of ſuch figures is blamed by the Halicarnaſſian—περὶ τὴς τὺ Δημοσθενυς δεινοτητος; c. 26. as making the ſtyle unfit for buſineſs and action, and ſuch as I have deſcribed it above, fit only for theatres and panegyrical aſſemblies, when men meet for the purpoſe only of being entertained, by having their ears and fancies amuſed.

Digitized by Google

uſe in poetry, and particularly in heroic poetry; for it both raiſes and varies the ſtyle. Homer has uſed it much, and ſo has our Milton; who, though he has not copied from Homer any one ſimile ſervilely, as far as I remember, has imitated his manner more than any other poet I know, without excepting even Virgil, who has copied more from Homer, but has not, in my judgment, imitated him ſo well. For Milton's ſimiles are, like Homer's, deſcriptions of the thing, without being confined to the point of ſimilitude; and he often animates them, as Homer likewiſe does, by introducing human ſentiments and paſſions into them *. This alſo is a figure of wit

* Of this kind is Milton's ſimile of the fallen angels, contracting their forms, and crouding into Pandæmonium:

——They but now who ſeem'd
In bigneſs to ſurpaſs earth's giant ſons,
Now leſs than ſmalleſt dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberleſs, like that Pygmæan race,
Beyond the Indian mount; or fairy elves,
Whoſe mid-night revels, by a foreſt's ſide,
Or fountain, ſome belated peaſant ſees,
Or dreams he ſees, while over-head the moon
Sits arbitreſs, and nearer to the earth

Digitized by Google

among our modern authors, and particularly is very much uſed by our writers of comedy.

What ſimile is to a metaphor, an allegory is to a ſimile. For, as a ſimile is a

> Wheels her pale courſe; they on their mirth and dance
> Intent, with jocund muſic charm his ear;
> At once, with joy and fear, his heart rebounds.
> Book I. v. 777.

He has another beautiful ſimile of the ſame kind in the 4th book of Paradiſe Loſt, beginning v. 980. where he compares the angels ſurrounding Satan with a grove of ſpears, bending towards him, to a field of corn waved with the wind:

> While thus he ſpake, the angelic ſquadron bright
> Turn'd fiery red, ſharp'ning in mooned horns
> Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
> With ported ſpears, as thick as when a field
> Of Ceres, ripe for harveſt, waving bends
> Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind
> Sways them: 'The careful plowman doubting ſtands,
> 'Left on the threſhing-floor his hopeful ſheaves
> 'Prove chaff.'

This is exactly after the manner of Homer in many of his ſimiles, particularly in the following, where he compares the fires of the Trojan camp to the heavens, in a clear, ſtarry, and moon-ſhine night;

Digitized by Google

lengthened metaphor, so an allegory is a lengthened simile. It is drawn out to so great a length, by some modern authors, as to run through a whole piece, and make

Ὡς δ' ὁτ' ἐν οὐρανῷ φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην
Φαίνετ' ἀριπρεπέα, ὁτε τ' ἐπλετο νήνεμος αἰθὴρ,
Ἐκ τ' ἴφανοι φασαι σκοπιαὶ, καὶ πρωονες ἄκροι,
Καὶ νάπαι· οὐρανόθεν δ' ἀῤ ὑπερῤῥαγη ἀσπετος αἰθὴρ.
Παντα δε τ' εἰδεται ἀστρα· γεγηθε δε τε φρενα ποιμην.
Il. θ. v. 555.

Again, in the fine simile of the two torrents meeting, to which he compares the shock of two armies engaging, he places a shepherd at a distance, hearing the noise, just as a painter who had been to draw the scene he describes would have enlivened his landskip, by setting down such a figure in it;

Ὡς δ' ὁτε χειμαῤῥοι ποταμοι, κατ' ὀρεσφι ῥεοντες,
Εἰς μισγαγκειαν συμβαλλετον ὀμβριμον ὑδωρ,
Κρουνων ἐκ μεγαλων, κοιλης ἐντοσθε χαραδρης·
Τῶν δε τε τηλοσε δουπον ἐν ὀρεσιν ἐκλυε ποιμην.
Lib. δ. v. 452.

It is by such descriptions that Homer has furnished so many good subjects for painters, more, I believe, than any other poet; for, as he paints in words, it is easy to copy him in colours; whereas, a poet that does not paint, but gives only a general description, as most of our modern poets do, cannot be copied by the painter. Some modern critics find fault with such similes, as containing many particulars that have nothing to do in the comparison; and particularly Mr. Perault, the

Digitized by Google

what we call an *allegorical poem*. I do not know that whole works of that kind were known in antient times; but it was uſed by them as an ornament and figure of ſtyle, and but very ſparingly, even in that way. Homer has but very few; though certain critics, antient as well as modern, have found a great many in him. Some indeed have allegorized every thing in him, the human as well as the divine perſonages. Virgil has been blamed, and I think very juſtly, for drawing out to ſo many lines the allegorical deſcription of Fame, which Homer has diſpatched in two *,

French critic, condemns them, and calls them ſimiles *a longue queue*, or *long-tailed ſimiles*. But ſuch critics do not conſider, that the Epic is a poem of great extent, and which does not haſten to its concluſion ſo much as tragedy. Therefore it admits of epiſodes, and ſuch deſcriptions and digreſſive ſimiles, as they may be called, and, in ſhort, of every thing that can raiſe or embelliſh the ſtyle, provided it be not altogether foreign to the purpoſe.

* Beſides this allegorical deſcription of Fame, I do not recollect any allegory, either in the Iliad or Odyſſey, except the ſtory which Phœnix tells to Achilles of *prayers*, which, he ſays, are the daughters of Jupiter, and follow *Ate*, repairing the miſchiefs that ſhe does; Il. i. v. 498. And the ſtory of the two caſks, that Achilles

Digitized by Google

And Milton, with greater reaſon, has been blamed for making ſuch allegorical perſonages, as *Sin* and *Death*, act ſo conſiderable a part in his poem.

Theſe are all, or, at leaſt, the principal figures of this kind that have got names; but every way by which the meaning may be any ways affected, and the compoſition varied from plain grammatical ſpeech, is properly called a *figure*. And that there may

tells to Priam, out of which Jupiter mixes the cup of mortals; Il. 24. v. 527. Ariſtarchus, therefore, the great antient critic, was miſtaken, when he ſaid there was no allegory at all in Homer; but he was very much nearer the truth than thoſe critics who allegorized every thing, even the human perſonages, ſuch as Hector and Achilles: See Euſtathius on Iliad Firſt. The truth is, that even what is called the mythology of Homer, is not allegory; but, like all the reſt of the mythology of Greece, hiſtorical facts much diſguiſed, indeed, by fable, with this difference, however, betwixt Homer's mythology and the later Greek mythology, that the former is made up of ſtories of the antient Egyptian kings, or gods, as they call them, with little or no addition from the invention of the Greeks, except changing the ſcene of their adventures from Egypt to Greece; the latter is the hiſtory of the Egyptian gods, much enlarged by Greek fables. For the Egyptian religion, when it was tranſplanted to Greece, flouriſhed exceedingly there, and produced a large growth of new divinities.

Digitized by Google

be many ſuch, as many as there are different ways of turning the ſame ſentence, is evident, both from the reaſon of the thing, and from the examples I have given.

But it will be ſaid, what is the uſe of turning the ſame thing ſo many different ways? And are not the methods I have already pointed out ſufficient, and more than ſufficient, for the purpoſe of men communicating their thoughts to one another? And, indeed, if nothing more were required than plain ſpeech, a great deal more than enough has been ſaid upon the ſubject. But we are ſpeaking of ornamented language; and for this is required, *firſt*, that things ſhould be expreſſed in a way ſomewhat different from the common and ordinary. Now, it may be improper to vary the compoſition of common ſpeech by any of the figures hitherto mentioned, and yet, ſome way or other, it muſt be varied, otherwiſe it would not be ornamented language. *2dly*, There muſt be a change even of ornament; for variety, as I have before obſerved, is abſolutely neceſſary in all the works of art, in order to make them

Digitized by Google

pleaſe; and the fineſt compoſition in the world, if it were to continue always the ſame, would, in the end, very much diſguſt *. One of the greateſt faults, therefore, of compoſition is, that noted by Quintilian †, under the name of *Homoiologia*; and it is one of the greateſt praiſes of the ſtyle of Demoſthenes, and is mentioned by the Halicarnaſſian as a well known mark by which his compoſition is diſtinguiſhed from that of every other orator, the varying his periods, and members of periods, and, in ſhort, every part of his compoſition, by different figures and forms

* See what the Halicarnaſſian has ſaid upon this ſubject, in his moſt valuable treatiſe περὶ δεινοτητος του Δημοσθενους, c. 48. where he compares ornate compoſition to what it reſembles more or leſs in all languages, but moſt of all in Greek; I mean muſic; and he ſuppoſes that a muſician was perfect as to melody, but had no regard to rhythm, could we endure, ſays he, ſuch a muſical compoſition? Again, let us ſuppoſe, that both the melody and rhythm are compleat, but that he continues always the ſame melody, and the ſame rhythms, without any change or variety, would not this ſpoil all?

† P. 698. Edit. Burmanni.

Digitized by Google

of expreſſion *. And all this variety may be ſo ordered, by a judicious ſpeaker or writer, that the ſenſe and matter, which ought to be the principal in all compoſitions, may not only not be hurt, but even aided and inforced by it.

* After having mentioned the melody and rhythm of his compoſition, of which we have ſo little idea, and made theſe two the firſt diſtinguiſhing marks of his ſtyle, he adds, τριτον ετι και τεταρτον ιδιωμα της συνθεσεως τη ρητορος ην, το τε εξαλλαττειν παντοδαπως, και το σχηματιζειν ποικιλως, τα κωλα και τας περιοδους. ουδε γαρ εστιν ουδεις απλως τοπος, ος ουχι διαπεποικιλται ταις τε εξαλλαγαις και τοις σχηματισμοις, ως απαντες ισασι· και μοι δοκει ταυτα μη λογων δεισθαι, γνωριμα και τοις φαυλοτατοις οντα. Περι της δεινοτητος του Δημοσθενους, p. 315. And again, in his ſecond treatiſe upon Thucydides, c. 53. p. 263. ſpeaking of Demoſthenes, he ſays, ταις μεταβολαις και τη ποικιλια, και τω μηδεν απλως ασχηματιστον εκφερειν νοημα, κοσμων την φρασιν. And, according to Cicero, Demoſthenes was reckoned the firſt of orators, on account of the variety of the figures, and *conformations*, as he calls them, of his ſentences. It is where he is ſpeaking of Antonius, a Roman orator, contemporary with Lucius Craſſus. Of him he ſays, that he excelled 'in ſententiarum orna-'mentis et conformationibus; quo genere, quia præſtat 'omnibus Demoſthenes, idcirco a doctis oratorum eſt 'princeps judicatus. Σχηματα enim, quæ vocant Græci, 'ea maximè ornant oratorem; eaque non tam in verbis 'pingendis habent pondus, quàm in illuminandis ſen-

Digitized by Google

This variety of compoſition is not only moſt beautiful and pleaſing, but, more than any thing elſe, ſecures an author or ſpeaker againſt parodies, or ridiculous imitations. For it is a ſameneſs in the ſtyle, and certain forms of expreſſion often recurring, that makes a ſtyle liable to be *taken off*, according to the common expreſſion. For proof of this, we ſee how the ſtyle of Salluſt or Tacitus has been imitated by ſome writers of later times; not indeed in the way of parody, but as ſomething fine and excellent of the kind: Whereas, the variety of Demoſthenes's compoſition it is impoſſible to ridicule, and exceedingly difficult to imitate. And, in general, it may be ſaid of a good ſtyle, as of a good face, that it has no ſtrong or diſtinguiſhing features, but it is the ſymmetry and juſt proportion of the whole that pleaſes. Such a face, however, is much more difficult to imitate in painting or ſculpture, than a face with any thing prominent, or out of due proportion.

'tentiis.' De Cl. Oratoribus, c. 37. And it is the compoſition which Æſchines, who ſhould have beſt known to what he owed his ruin, praiſes moſt in his antagoniſt, as the Halicarnaſſian informs us.

Digitized by Google

There is no author, as far as I know, that has attempted to divide and claſs, under different heads, all this variety of figures. It would not be an eaſy taſk; and I doubt whether it would be worth the while. I ſhall therefore do, as Plato ſays the unlearned do, when they would explain any thing: Inſtead of taking the whole together, dividing and ſubdividing, and unfolding it by definition, they go to particulars, and explain it by examples *. And as ſome, even of my learned readers, may not be familiarly acquainted with Demoſthenes, who, as I have ſaid, excelled ſo much in the variety of his figures, I will take my examples from an author better known, viz. Virgil. This author lived to finiſh only two pieces, his *Eclogues*, and his *Georgics*, both maſter-pieces of ſtyle and compoſition, but different, in that reſpect, one from the other. The ſtyle of the Eclogues is elegant and ornamented; at the ſame time, it has much of rural ſimplicity (not the Doric ruſticity of

* See Plato in the paſſage quoted above, p. 126. from the third book de Republica.

Digitized by Google

Theocritus); ſo that it is rather ſweet and pleaſant, than highly and richly ornamented*. I except, however, the fourth Eclogue, of which, as the ſubject is not rural,

* It is of that kind of ſtyle which Horace characterizes by the epithets of *molle et facetum*,

——— *Molle atque facetum*
Virgilio annuerint gaudentes rure Camœnæ;

where the Engliſh reader would be much miſtaken if he ſhould tranſlate *facetum* by the word *facetious*, derived from it, of which there is nothing in the ſtyle of Virgil's eclogues; but it anſwers to what the Greek critics call the τὸ γλαφυρὸν in compoſition, which may be tranſlated *ſweet and elegant*. This ſhews us, that it is impoſſible thoroughly to underſtand the Latin, and what the Latin authors have written upon the ſubject of any art, without knowing the language of their maſters, the Greeks: And, *ſecondly*, it confirms the obſervation made above, that a great part of the Latin words we have adopted into our language are taken from a falſe and barbarous Latinity.

For a ſpecimen of the *molle et facetum* of the ſtyle of the Eclogues, I refer the reader to the beginning of the eighth Eclogue, which runs thus:

Paſtorum muſam Damonis et Alpheſibœi,
Immemor herbarum quos eſt mirata juvenca
Certantes, quorum ſtupefactæ carmine lynces,
Et mutata ſuos requierunt flumina curſus;
Damonis muſam dicemus et Alpheſibœi.

Digitized by Google

the ſtyle is much more raiſed and embelliſhed than that of any other of them; and, accordingly, the poet, in the beginning of this Eclogue, tells us, that he is to raiſe his ſtyle above the country *. The Georgics, on the other hand, are embelliſhed with every ornament of ſtyle that can be imagined; even the didactic part of them is ornamented; in which, as I ſhall take occaſion to obſerve afterwards, he differs from Lucretius. But, as to the digreſſions, they are the richeſt pieces of compoſition that are extant; and, it would ſeem, that, as in the Eclogue, which ſings of the return of the golden age, and the renovation of all things, he wanted to make his *woods* worthy of a conſul; ſo, in his Georgics, he ſtudied to make his *fields* worthy of his great patron, Auguſtus Cæſar. It is from the digreſſions, therefore, that I ſhall take my examples—a few out of many that might be given, but ſufficient, I hope, to ſhew how much and how agreeably the ſtyle

* Sicelides Muſæ, paulo majora canamus;
Non omnes arbuſta juvant, humileſque myricæ.
Si canimus ſylvas, ſylvæ ſint Conſule dignæ.

Digitized by Google

may be varied otherwiſe than by any of the figures hitherto mentioned.

In deſcribing the different prognoſtics of the weather, towards the end of the firſt Georgic, after mentioning the actions of different animals, by which they preſage a ſtorm, and particularly that of the *cornix*, or *raven*, he ſays of her, that

———Plena pluviam vocat improba voce,
Et ſola in ſicca ſecum ſpatiatur arena.

He then changes the form of the ſtyle, as well as the prognoſtic, in the following lines:

Nec nocturna quidem carpentes penſa puellæ
Neſcivêre Hiemem; teſta cum ardente viderent
Scintillare oleum, et putres concreſcere fungos.
V. 390.

Then he goes on ſtill changing:

Nec minus ex imbri ſoles et aperta ſerena
Proſpicere, et certis poteris cognoſcere ſignis.
V. 393.

After deſcribing ſome appearances of the morning, he tells us what the conſequences of thoſe appearances will be, in the following manner:

Digitized by Google

Heu, male tum mites defendet pampinus uvas;
Tum multa in tectis crepitans salit horrida grando.
v. 448.

Immediately after this, in passing to the omens that are to be taken from the evening, and the setting-sun, he gives this turn to the composition:

Hoc etiam, emenso cum jam decedet Olympo,
Profuerit meminisse magis.—— v. 450.

And he tells us the effect of certain appearances at that time, in the following beautiful manner:

——Non illa quisquam me nocte per altum
Ire, neque a terra moneat convellere funem.
v. 456.

Where, instead of telling us simply that it would be a tempestuous night, 'Let no-'body,' says he, 'advise me to unmoor my 'bark, or put to sea in that night.'

With the omens of the weather, and particularly those which are drawn from the appearances of the sun, he connects the prodigies that appeared about the time of Julius Cæsar's death in the following lines:

Digitized by Google

Denique, quid veſper ſerus vehat, unde ſerenas
Ventus agat nubes, quid cogitet humidus Auſter,
Sol tibi ſigna dabit: Solem quis dicere falſum
Audeat? Ille etiam cæcos inſtare tumultus
Sæpe monet, fraudemque et operta tumeſcere bella.
Ille etiam extincto miſeratus Cæſare Romam,
Cum caput obſcura nitidum ferrugine texit,
Impiaque æternam timuerunt ſæcula noctem.
v. 461.

Then he changes the form thus:

Tempore quanquam illo tellus quoque, et æquora ponti,
Obſcœnique canes, importunæque volucres,
Signa dabant. v. 469.

Then he changes again:

——Quoties Cyclopum effervere in agros
Vidimus undantem ruptis fornacibus Ætnam,
Flammarumque globos, liquefactaque volvere ſaxa!

After this he proceeds to mix, with this artificial, ſome plain compoſition, telling us ſimply what happened:

Armorum ſonitum toto Germania cœlo
Audiit; inſolitis tremuerunt motibus Alpes.
Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita ſilentes
Ingens, et ſimulacra modis pallentia miris
Viſa ſub obſcurum noctis, &c. v. 474.

And ſo he goes on for ſeveral lines, till he again figures the ſtyle in this manner:

Digitized by Google

——Nec tempore eodem
Triſtibus aut extis fibræ apparere minaces,
Aut puteis manare cruor ceſſavit. v. 483.

Then, after going on a little farther in this form, he changes to another of this kind:

Non alias cœlo ceciderunt plura ſereno
Fulgura, nec diræ toties arſere cometæ. v. 487.

Then he proceeds to tell what happened in conſequence of theſe omens; and, with the ſubject, he changes the phraſeology:

Ergo inter ſeſe paribus concurrere telis
Romanas acies iterum videre Philippi. v. 489.

Then he takes another figure:

Nec fuit indignum ſuperis, bis ſanguine noſtro
Emathiam, et latos Hæmi pingueſcere campos.

Then he changes again:

Scilicet et tempus veniet, cum finibus illis
Agricola, incurvo terram molitus aratro,
Exeſa inveniet ſcabra rubigine pila,
Aut gravibus raſtris galeas pulſabit inanes,
Grandiaque effoſſis mirabitur oſſa ſepulchris.

And ſo he goes on (for it would be tedious to mention more particulars) to the end of the book, diverſifying and adorning his

Digitized by Google

compoſition, by figures which have no name, but of which every reader of taſte muſt feel the effect, though he do not, perhaps, know the cauſe.

In the ſecond Georgic, there is a moſt beautiful digreſſion in praiſe of Italy, his native country, which he has adorned with the richeſt colours of his poetry. He had before deſcribed a remarkable tree that grows in Media. With this deſcription he connects the praiſes of Italy in the following manner:

> Sed neque Medorum ſylvæ, ditiſſima terra,
> Nec pulcher Ganges, atque auro turbidus Hermus,
> Laudibus Italiæ certent; non Bactra, neque Indi, &c.
> Georg. 2. v. 136.

He goes on in this negative form for a few lines, till he comes to

> Sed gravidæ fruges, et Bacchi Maſſicus humor,
> Implevere; tenent oleæ armentaque læta.

Then he changes again:

> Hinc bellator equus campo ſeſe arduus infert, &c.

And ſo he goes on for ſome lines, and then he gives us a new form:

Digitized by Google

At rabidæ tigres abſunt, et ſæva leonum
Semina.——

Then he leaves this form, and gives us another;

——Nec miſeros fallunt aconita legentes.

And, after dwelling upon this for two lines more, then he changes again:

Adde tot egregias urbes, operumque laborem.

And, after continuing this ſtyle a little longer, he changes to this form;

An mare, quod ſupra, memorem, quodque alluit infra,
Anne lacus tantos?——

Then he uſes a ſtronger figure, and which has got a name, being called *Apoſtrophe*:

——Te, Lari maxime, teque
Fluctibus et fremitu aſſurgens, Benace, marino?

And ſo he goes on, ſtill varying, till he concludes the digreſſion with a form altogether different from any he has hitherto uſed, viz. a ſalutation of his native country, in theſe beautiful lines:

Salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,
Magna virum: Tibi res antiquæ laudis et artis

Digitized by Google

Ingredior, ſanctos auſus recludere fontes;
Aſcræumque cano Romana per oppida carmen.
V. 173.

If I had not ſaid enough, and perhaps more than enough, to explain what I mean by thoſe nameleſs figures of compoſition, ſo many, and ſo various, I would refer the reader to ſeveral other paſſages in this highly finiſhed work, and particularly to what he has written in praiſe of a country-life, in the end of the ſecond Georgic. There, beſides the figures of variety we are now ſpeaking of, he has deſcribed the city-life, with a pomp of language that nothing can exceed;

Si non ingentem foribus domus alta ſuperbis
Mane ſalutantum totis vomit ædibus undam,
Nec varios inhiant pulchra teſtudine poſtes,
Illuſaſque auro veſtes, Ephyreïaque æra;
Alba neque Aſſyrio fucatur lana veneno,
Nec Caſia liquidi corrumpitur uſus olivi.

Then he changes his ſtyle at once; and, in contraſt to the pomp of the city-life, deſcribes the ſimple country-life, in a language as ſimple, only ſweetened and enlivened a little by the figure *Repetition:*

At ſecura quies, et neſcia fallere vita,
Dives opum variarum, at latis otia fundis,

Digitized by Google

Speluncæ, vivique lacus; at frigida Tempe,
Mugituſque boum, molleſque ſub arbore ſomni,
Non abſunt.——

I ſhall have done with Virgil, when I have obſerved, that it is not the variety of the ſtructure only which I commend in the verſes I have quoted; but they have, beſides, almoſt every other ornament, either of ſingle words, or of compoſition, and are in every reſpect moſt beautiful, and well worthy of the labour which, we are told, he beſtowed on making them.

Milton, in this variety, has not been deficient, any more than in other ornaments of ſtyle. But, as I have already quoted a great deal from him, I will not trouble the reader with any more of his, but will go to a living author, that I may ſhew, that even theſe *coſter-monger* days, to uſe a phraſe of Shakeſpeare's, have produced, at leaſt, one poet, that deſerves to be quoted as a model of good compoſition; and, that I may not incur the ſuſpicion of envy and malignity, which Horace throws upon ſome critics of his time:

Digitized by Google

Ingeniis non ille plaudit favetque ſepultis;
Noſtra ſed invidet, nos noſtraque lividus odit.

The perſon I mean is Dr. Armſtrong, author of the Poem upon Health; the beſt didactic poem, without diſpute, in our language, and ſuch as will bear compariſon even with the Georgics of Virgil, whoſe elegance of ſtyle he has choſen to imitate, rather than the dry philoſophic manner of Lucretius. Beſides elegance, the Doctor has nerves in his ſtyle, more, I think, than any writer of this age; and there is in it the cloſeneſs and denſity of Thucydides, without the obſcurity. Much more might be ſaid in praiſe of this poem; but what I quote it for at preſent, is chiefly to obſerve the variety of its compoſition.

Though Virgil be his pattern of ſtyle, in the didactic part of the work, he has imitated Lucretius in his exordium, and in the beginnings of his books. He opens his poem, therefore, with an invocation of the goddeſs *Health*, in a very high ſtrain of poetry, finely varied and ornamented. He begins,

Digitized by Google

Daughter of Pæon, queen of every joy,
Hygeia; whoſe indulgent ſmile ſuſtains
The various race luxuriant nature pours,
And on the immortal eſſences beſtows
Immortal youth; auſpicious, O deſcend!
Thou cheerful guardian of the rolling year.

Then he varies the form of the compoſition in theſe two beautiful lines, finely contraſted with one another:

Whether thou wanton'ſt on the weſtern gale,
Or ſhak'ſt the rigid pinions of the north.

He goes on in this way for two lines more, and then he changes again:

When thro' the blue ſerenity of heaven
Thy power approaches, all the waſteful hoſt
Of pain and ſickneſs, ſqualid and deform'd,
Confounded, ſink into the loathſome gloom,
Where, in deep Erebus involv'd, the fiends
Grow more profane.——

Then he has another change of the phraſe:

——Whatever ſhapes of death
Shook from the hideous chambers of the globe,
Swarm thro' the ſhuddering air.——

This figure he carries on through ſeveral very beautiful lines, in which he enumerates the different cauſes of diſeaſes, but not without this beautiful variety towards the end:

Digitized by Google

——Or if aught
The comet's glare amid the burning ſky,
Mournful eclipſe, or planets ill combin'd,
Portend diſaſtrous to the vital world.

The period is very long, conſiſting of no leſs than twenty lines and a half; but it is only the more beautiful on that account, having the greater variety, and being, at the ſame time, ſo well compoſed, as not to be in the leaſt obſcure; and we may obſerve in it a very fine imitation of Horace, though at ſo great a diſtance as hardly to be perceptible. It is where he ſpeaks of

——The pale tribes halting in the train
Of vice and headleſs pleaſure.——

where, I believe, the Doctor has had in view the *pœna pede claudo* of Horace.

In the next paragraph he renews his invocation in lines alſo very beautiful, and, at the ſame time, propoſes his ſubject in a ſtyle as ſimple as that with which Virgil propoſes his in the beginning of his Georgics, thus imitating both the pomp of the exordium of the one poet and the plainneſs of that of the other.

His compliment to Dr. Mead is finely turned.

Digitized by Google

Nor ſhould I wander doubtful of my way,
Had I the lights of that ſagacious mind,
Which taught to check the peſtilential fire,
And quell the dreaded Python of the Nile.

Having thus invoked the goddeſs that preſides over health, propoſed the ſubject, and complimented his patron, he enters upon the ſubject, and begins with warning thoſe who have a regard to their health, to beware of the air of the city, the bad qualities of which he has deſcribed in the ſtrongeſt words that the Engliſh language, or, I think, any other affords, put together in numerous verſe, and moſt beautiful and various compoſition, in which the nervous and auſtere is very judiciouſly mixed with the ſweet and flowing. This laſt is particularly remarkable, where he recommends the country air, and the ſituation of ſome country places about London. It would be too much to quote the whole; and to quote any part of it divided from the reſt, would be doing injuſtice to the author. I ſhall, therefore, only further add, that the matter in this paſſage, and indeed through the whole work, is, as far as I am a judge, as excellent as the ſtyle and compoſition.

Digitized by Google

Nor is it in the exordium of first book only, that he has studied this variety of composition; but, throughout the whole work, he has varied and changed the form of expression more than any author that I know in English, whether of prose or of verse; and yet his changes are so natural, and so much adapted to the subject, that they seem to be not at all studied, though any person, who has experience in writing, must know, that they have cost him a great deal of pains and study. I will give but a few instances more, out of hundreds that might be quoted. In the second book, speaking of the difference of food, he apostrophises certain of his readers in this way,

——But ye, of softer clay,
Infirm and delicate, and ye who waste,
With pale and bloated sloth, the tedious day,
Avoid the stubborn aliment, avoid
The full repast,—— Book 2. v. 51. & seqq.

This is a very lively figure; for it very much animates the style, and raises the attention of the reader. The Doctor, therefore, uses it much, but not too much, nor ever to satiety.

3

Again, ſpeaking of the ſweet ſleep of the labouring man, he ſays,

—He not in vain
Invokes the gentle deity of dreams;
His powers the moſt voluptuouſly diſſolve
In ſoft repoſe, &c. Book 3. v. 392.

Where he appears to have had in view what Virgil ſays, ſpeaking of a farmer who practiſes certain things:

—Neque illum
Flava Ceres alto necquicquam ſpectat Olympo.
Geor. lib. 1. v. 96.

And again, ſpeaking ſtill of ſleep, he varies his ſtyle by a claſſical idiom, much uſed by Virgil:

——Nor does it nought avail
What ſeaſon you to drowſy Morpheus give,
Of the ever-varying circle of the day.
Book 3. v. 425.

Again, ſpeaking of hot weather,

——Me, near the cool caſcade
Reclin'd, or ſaunt'ring in the lofty grove,
No needleſs ſlight occaſion ſhould engage
To pant and ſweat beneath the fiery noon.
Ib. v. 470.

Here the Doctor appears likewiſe to have

Digitized by Google

had Virgil in view, in the paſſage above quoted, where he ſays,

Non illa quiſquam me nocte per altum
Ire, nec a terra moneat convellere funem.

In theſe, and many more paſſages, the Doctor has imitated Virgil; and I do not heſitate to ſay, that, in ſome of them, he has even exceeded his original, particularly in one where he deſcribes the celeſtial bodies in this manner:

——Ye eternal fires,
That lead through heaven the wand'ring year;

which, I think, is better than Virgil's

——Vos, O clariſſima mundi
Lumina, labentem cœlo qui ducitis annum:

Becauſe *wandering* is a more ſignificant epithet, denoting, in poetical language, the obliquity of the ecliptic, than *labentem*, which expreſſes no more than the gliding motion of the year.

The Doctor, among other varieties, has that of digreſſions, ſome of them extremely beautiful: One particularly pleaſes me. It

Digitized by Google

is that in which he deſcribes the ſimplicity of the firſt ages of the world, contraſted with our modern refinements. The paſſage is ſo fine, that, though it be long, I cannot help tranſcribing it. It is in the ſecond book, where he recommends the drinking of water:

No warmer cups the rural ages knew,
None warmer ſought the fires of human kind;
Happy in temperate peace, their equal days
Felt not th' alternate fits of fev'riſh mirth,
And ſick dejection; ſtill ſerene and pleas'd,
They knew no pains, but what the tender ſoul
With pleaſure yields to, and would ne'er forget:
Bleſt with divine immunity from ails,
Long centuries they liv'd; their only fate
Was ripe old age, and rather ſleep than death.
Oh! could thoſe worthies, from the world of Gods,
Return to viſit their degen'rate ſons,
How would they ſcorn the joys of modern times,
With all our art and toil improv'd to pain?
Too happy they! But wealth brought luxury,
And luxury on ſloth begot diſeaſe!

There is another which pleaſes me ſtill more. It is in the ſame ſecond book, where he recommends a right uſe of wealth. The paſſage is too long to be all tranſcribed, and I ſhall only give the reader thoſe lines of it in which he deſcribes the various miſeries

Digitized by Google

of life that may be relieved by money, properly applied?

——Form'd of such clay as yours,
The sick, the needy, shiver at your gate;
Even modest want may bless your hand unseen,
Tho' hush'd in patient wretchedness at home.
Is there no virgin, grac'd with ev'ry charm,
But that which binds the mercenary vow?
No youth of genius, whose neglected bloom,
Unfoster'd, sickens in the barren shade?
No worthy man, by Fortune's random blows,
Or by a heart too gen'rous and humane,
Constrain'd to leave his happy natal seat,
And sigh for wants more bitter than his own?
There are, while human miseries abound,
A thousand ways to waste superfluous wealth,
Without one fool or flatt'rer at your board,
Without one hour of sickness or disgust.

The passage is, in every respect, exceedingly beautiful; but what I chiefly quote it for is, to shew that the author, among other talents of a great writer, possesses the tender and pathetic.

Besides the various turns and figures which the Doctor gives to his thoughts, there is a variety in his versification which I much admire. And I praise his style for another thing, which, though it be but a

Digitized by Google

negative commendation, may be reckoned a great praiſe in this age. What I mean is, that there is nothing in it like point, or affectation of wit. In theſe two reſpects his compoſition is very different from that of Mr. Pope. For, though Mr. Pope's verſification be very ſweet and flowing, and I think, upon the whole, the beſt rhyming verſification in Engliſh, there is in it an uniformity which is not pleaſing to my ear; and in his ſtyle there is too much of the witty figure called *Antitheſis;* and he gives a quaint turn to the thought and expreſſion, which is far removed from the noble ſimplicity of antient compoſition. Theſe peculiarities in his ſtyle and verſification are ſo well marked, that it is not difficult *to take them off;* and, accordingly, he has been exceedingly well imitated in both by the author of verſes upon tobacco, which were publiſhed in a Magazine about forty years ago, and which, I have been told, affected Mr. Pope more ſenſibly than any thing that ever was written againſt him; and, I think, with good reaſon, as they ſhewed the two greateſt defects in his poetry. Now, let any man try to imitate,

Digitized by Google

in that manner, Dr. Armſtrong's ſtyle and verſification, and he will find, that the Doctor deſerves the praiſe which I have beſtowed upon Demoſthenes, of not having a ſtyle and manner liable to be parodied, or caricatured.

I ſhould go much too far from my preſent purpoſe, if I were to praiſe all the beauties of this admirable poem. But, I hope, I have quoted enough to ſhew that it particularly excells in that beauty of ſtyle of which I am now treating, namely, the variety of figures, and turns of expreſſion, concerning which I ſhall only further obſerve, that, though poetry admit and require many more of them than proſe does*,

* In this matter of variety, as in every thing elſe, there may be an exceſs: And I recollect a ſtory which Seneca the rhetorician relates of one Oſcus, a famous declaimer of his time, who was ſo great a lover of the figured ſtyle, that he inſiſted every thing ſhould be expreſſed in that round-about way, and nothing in a plain and ſimple manner. Another declaimer, who was of a different opinion, meeting him one day, inſtead of ſaluting him according to the ordinary way of *ave, Oſce*, accoſted him with a figured ſalutation—*poteram, inquit, dicere—ave, Oſce*; Lib. 5. Controverſ. in præfat.

Digitized by Google

yet, even in proſe, and particularly in rhetorical compoſition, if this variety be not ſtudied, I will venture to affirm, that the performance will not pleaſe a judicious critic, nor even a man of good natural taſte, who will deſiderate ſomething in it, though perhaps he cannot tell what it is: And, however trifling theſe obſervations may appear to ſome, it was chiefly by a particular attention to this part of ſtyle that Demoſthenes, as we have ſeen, obtained the reputation of the greateſt orator that ever lived.

I have inſiſted the more upon this ornament of ſtyle, becauſe I think the greateſt part of our later Engliſh authors are very deficient in it. The ſtyle of my Lord Bolingbroke is both nervous and elegant, full of matter and argument; but it is not ſufficiently varied. At firſt he appears to have formed his taſte upon the ſtyle of Seneca; for his letters on exile, which, I believe, was the firſt thing he wrote, are profeſſedly in imitation of that author. This ſtyle, from its nature, cannot have ſufficient variety: And it was, perhaps, for this reaſon that my Lord grew diſguſted with Seneca's *ſand*

Digitized by Google

without lime, and began to compose in a better taste. But, though he made his sentences longer, sometimes, I think, too long, there was not variety enough in the composition; for he still retained a tincture of Seneca's manner, and therefore the members of his long sentences are either altogether unconnected, or inartificially connected, and not aptly inserted into one another, so as to give a roundness and compactness to the whole. And, in general, though my Lord Bolingbroke excells in the choice of words, he is, I think, defective in the art of composition, and, for that reason, is sometimes obscure. Dr. Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, a contemporary of his, composes much better; his words too are correct and elegant: And, upon the whole, I think him the best composer of sermons in English; but neither has he sufficient variety of turns and figures of composition. To be convinced of this, we need only compare his style with that of my Lord Shaftsbury, who, like his master Plato, is as various in his composition as he is rich and copious in words.—There is great force, as well as propriety, in the words of Dr. Swift's

Digitized by Google

ſtyle: But he likewiſe does not diverſify ſufficiently the ſtructure of his language; and therefore the ſtyle, in which he chiefly excells, as I ſhall afterwards obſerve, is the ſimple ſtyle, where very little variety of compoſition is required.

And here I finiſh what I had to ſay upon the ornament of words, whether conſidered as ſingle, or joined together, and which I call the materials of compoſition. There are, I know, who will deſpiſe the labour I have beſtowed, in thus minutely diſſecting the ſeveral parts of ſtyle. Theſe are critics, who think their genius ſtands not in need of the aſſiſtance of learning, and who like the perſons of quality, of whom Moliere ſpeaks, *underſtand every thing, without having learned any thing.* But men of learning and modeſty know, that the greateſt things, both in nature and art, ariſe from ſmall beginnings, and that there are elements of every art, and of the critical, among others, without the ſtudy of which we can never be able performers, nor even accurate judges. Such men will rather think, that, inſtead of being too minute and particular, I have not

Digitized by Google

explained many things ſo much as I might and ought to have done. But, I hope, I have done all that I profeſſed to do in the beginning of this part of my work, which was to direct the attention of the reader to what is moſt material in ſtyle and compoſition, and to point out to him the authors that could inſtruct him better than I am able; at the ſame time, laying down a method, which will take in every thing belonging to the art, ranged in its proper order.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. X.

An apology for the style of the Author.—The three general characters of style: The simple, the highly ornamented, and the middle between these two.—Nature and use of the simple style.—Lysias, the first who brought this style to perfection.—Menander, and his Translator, Terence, are perfect models of it.—Among the moderns, Dean Swift, in his Gulliver's Travels, has excelled in it.

THERE is an objection which will naturally occur to every reader, that, if the study of the minute things belonging to composition be so useful as I would make it, and so conducive to the forming a style of elegance and ornament, how comes it that my own style is so plain and unadorned, without that variety of composition which I admire and praise so much in other authors?

Digitized by Google

To this I anſwer, that, as I ſaid in the beginning of this volume, genius, as well as knowledge of the rules, is neceſſary for excelling in every art. Though, therefore, I may be defective in genius (for pains and labour ſhould not be wanting in any thing that a man preſents to the public,) it ought not to diſcredit my rules, which may be very uſeful to others, though I cannot give an example of them myſelf. For I may, as Horace ſays, ſerve the purpoſe of a whet-ſtone, and ſharpen the wits of other men, *exſors ipſe ſecandi*. 2*dly*, I ſay, that, in a work like this, not of the rhetorical or poetical kind, which is not intended to move or excite paſſion, or even to perſuade without inſtructing, a ſtyle much figured or ornamented would be improper. Order and method in the matter, and plainneſs and perſpicuity in the diction, are the chief beauties of ſuch a work. Variety, however, in the ſtyle, to a certain degree, it will admit; and this I have ſo far ſtudied, as to endeavour to avoid a tireſome ſameneſs in the compoſition. I hope likewiſe, that I have ſo far profited by ſtudying thoſe chaſte and correct models of antiquity, upon which

Digitized by Google

I have formed my taſte, as to have avoided a fault in writing, which, at the ſame time that it gives much trouble to the author, is perhaps, of all others, the moſt offenſive to a judicious reader; I mean labouring much to write ill. For it often happens, that writing in bad taſte coſts much more trouble than writing well. This odious affectation, I truſt, I have avoided, by not aiming at too much ornament. At the ſame time, I am far from denying, that there might have been more of variety and ornament, even in ſuch a didactic work as this, and without any impropriety. For there is another advantage, at leaſt I reckon it ſo, of propoſing to yourſelf the beſt patterns of imitation, that you cannot be over fond of your own productions: Whereas, if your ſtandard of perfection be an inferior one, you may, with genius and application, get beyond it, and ſo imagine that you have attained to a height of perfection, that no man before you ever reached. But, if the great antient models are your ſtandard, your vanity will be conſtantly mortified, by obſerving how much you fall ſhort of them; and you will diſcover that, what the mo-

Digitized by Google

deſt Virgil ſaid of his imitations of Homer, is true of the imitation of all the great authors of antiquity, 'That it is more eaſy to 'take the club from Hercules, than a line 'from Homer.' If, therefore, the reader would ſee a ſtyle of criticiſm more ornamented, I muſt refer him to the Halicarnaſſian's critical works, where he will find as much variety and ornament as, I think, are compatible with that accurate ſcience, which, at the ſame time, is to be found in thoſe works. Cicero's books upon the rhetorical art may alſo be recommended for the ornaments of ſtyle; and indeed, in my judgment, they are ornamented in a better taſte than his orations. But, as he was more an orator than a philoſopher, or man of ſcience of any kind, and had never practiſed teaching, as the Halicarnaſſian did, we cannot expect in him the ſame accuracy of ſcience; though neither is that wanting. But he was no more than a ſcholar of the Greek maſters; and, I am ſorry to ſay it, not a grateful one *. But, to return to our ſubject.

* I am really provoked at the contempt with which Cicero ſometimes ſpeaks of the Greeks, from whom, as he confeſſes himſelf, he learned all his philoſophy; to which

Digitized by Google

In the preceeding chapters, I have treated of the various forms and figures that words aſſume, whether ſingle or in compoſition. Theſe may be ſaid to be the mate-

as he ſays, he owed his reputation in oratory; for he boaſts, that he proceeded an orator, not out of the ſhops of rhetoricians, but from the walks of the academy, 'Se non ex 'rhetorum officinis, ſed ex academiæ ſpatiis, oratorem 'extitiſſe;' *Orator. ad M. Brut.* c. 12. And in the rhetorical art itſelf, it is a well known fact, that he owed his chief improvement to Molo, a Greek rhetorician, under whom he practiſed, both at Rome, where he had an opportunity of hearing him twice, and alſo at Rhodes, to which place it appears he went on purpoſe, in order to be inſtructed by Molo, who was of that iſland. By his leſſons he was corrected of a bad manner, which he had acquired in the Latin ſchools of declamation, and returned from his travels to Rome, changed, as it were, into a new man, as he tells us himſelf in his book *De clar. Orator.* which he has inſcribed to Brutus. But, notwithſtanding all theſe obligations he had to the Greeks, he calls them by the diminutive name of *Græculi*; ſpeaks of them as an idle prating people, *otioſi et loquaces*; Lib. i. de Oratore, c. 22. He ſays, that, though they are *inepti* more than any other people, yet they have not a name for the thing; for he even prefers the Latin language to the Greek, as more rich and copious; Lib. i. de Fin. c. 3. And the genius of his countrymen, he ſays, excelled that of all other nations; Lib. i. de Oratore, c. 4. *in fine.* And, in another place, he ſays, that they had either invented every thing better than the Greeks, or improved what they had received from the Greeks; Tuſc. Quæſt. Lib. i.

Digitized by Google

rials of which ſtyle is made; and, according as theſe materials are uſed, ſtyle takes different *colours*, as I call them, by which it is denominated ſuch or ſuch a kind of ſtyle; ſimple, for example, or ornamented—hiſtorical, rhetorical, or didactic; and it is of theſe colours of ſtyle that I am now to treat.

What we call *ſtyle*, being, as I have ſaid, ſomething different from plain grammatical ſpeech, and more or leſs ornamented, the firſt and moſt natural diviſion of it is taken from the greater or leſs degree of ornament beſtowed upon it. And, as every thing in which quantity is conſidered is leaſt, or greateſt, or middle and betwixt the two, ſo it is with ſtyle; that which is leaſt ornamented we call the *Simple ſtyle;*

c. 1. But Cicero was very vain; and the vanity of the individual, as I have elſewhere obſerved, naturally goes to the nation; for every thing belonging to a vain man muſt needs be excellent of the kind. And, what is worſt of all, vanity very often acquits itſelf of every obligation of gratitude, receiving all good offices, not as *favours*, but as *debts* paid to extraordinary merit.

Digitized by Google

that which is moſt, we call the *High ſtyle;* and that which is betwixt the two, is the *Middle ſtyle;* and theſe make the three general colours, or characters, as they are commonly called, of ſtyle *.

The firſt kind is ſo little ornamented, that it appears not to be ornamented at all, and to be no better than common ſpeech; for it has no *ambitious* ornaments, as they may be called, nothing prominent, or, as it were, ſticking out; and what Petronius Arbiter ſays of a good ſtyle, will, in a particular manner, apply to this, when it is brought to perfection—'naturali pulchritudine exſur-'git †.' This is ſo true, that a man, not learned in the critical art, or who has not formed a taſte by much reading and obſervation, will be apt to think, that all is nature in this ſtyle, and no art at all. But, when he comes to try to imitate

* This is the way that the Halicarnaſſian has proceeded in conſidering ſtyle—διελομενος την λεξιν εις τρεις χαρακτηρας τῆς γενικωτατους, τον τε ἰσχνον, καὶ τον ὑψηλον, καὶ τον μεταξυ τουτων—περὶ τῆς δεινοτητος τυ Δημοσθενους; cap. 33.

† *Satyris, in initio.*

Digitized by Google

it, he will find that what Horace ſays is true,

——Sudat multum, fruſtraque laborat
Auſus idem.——

The Halicarnaſſian tells us*, that all the hiſtorians of Greece, before Herodotus who firſt ornamented hiſtory, wrote in this ſtyle †; all the antient philoſophers too of Greece, who wrote upon ſubjects of natural philoſophy; and the whole Socratic ſchool, Plato only excepted, who firſt ornamented philoſophy, as Herodotus had done hiſtory; the antient orators too, as the Halicarnaſſian ſays, ſpoke and wrote in this character of ſtyle ‡; and the ſame, no doubt, was the

* Περι της δεινοτητος τω Δημοσθενους, cap. 7. et de Thucyd. cap. 23.

† Such were Hecatæus, Hellanicus, and others, who wrote what the Halicarnaſſian calls *Genealogical and Topical Hiſtories*. Joſephus, in his firſt book againſt Apion, c. 22. has preſerved to us ſome paſſages from Hecatæus, by which the learned reader will judge of the ſimplicity of his ſtyle. And there is a fragment of Hellanicus preſerved, but I cannot recollect in what author, which is ſtill more ſimple.

‡ See Cicero, de clar. Orator. c. 7. where he gives us a hiſtory of the progreſs of eloquence in Greece.

Digitized by Google

ſtyle of the firſt orators of Rome, after ſpeaking became an art in that city, which, as Cicero informs us, did not happen till about the time of Ennius the poet, who praiſes one M. Cornelius Cethegus as a good ſpeaker *. In the more antient times, both of Greece and Rome,

Cum neque muſarum ſcopulos quiſquam ſuperârat,
Nec dicti ſtudioſus erat———

as old Ennius ſays, there was no doubt a great deal of ſpeaking, as it was in that way that all public affairs were conducted in both nations; but it was only in later times that it became an art; ſo that, till then, the orators could not properly be ſaid to ſpeak in any *ſtyle*, but only to deliver their ſentiments in a rude artleſs manner.

This ſimple ſtyle was brought to perfection, as the Halicarnaſſian ſays †, by Lyſias the Athenian orator; and, indeed, what remains of him well juſtifies the praiſe which this critic has beſtowed upon him. In the narrative particularly he is admi-

* Cicero, de clar. Orator. c. 15. † *Ubi ſupra.*

Digitized by Google

rable; and it is to that part of an oration that this ſtyle is moſt ſuitable. For if a narrative is much ornamented, it has not the appearance of truth, but of a tale, deſigned either to impoſe upon the hearer, or to make an oſtentatious ſhew of the author's genius. Hence it comes, that the narrative of Homer is more credible than that of Virgil, not only becauſe it is more circumſtantial, which alſo gives a great air of truth to a ſtory, but becauſe it is leſs ornamented.

Demoſthenes, as he had all the great talents of an orator, ſo he poſſeſſed this faculty, among others, of writing moſt ſimply, and without the leaſt appearance of art, though he was maſter of every art belonging to the profeſſion. Indeed, I was never thoroughly convinced of his being ſo perfect in the art, till I came to read the narratives of ſome of his orations in private cauſes, particularly one quoted by the Halicarnaſſian, from his oration againſt Gonon, which is ſo much in the ſtyle of Lyſias, that, as this critic ſays, if it were not for

Digitized by Google

the title and inſcription, it would be impoſſible to ſay, whether it belonged to Lyſias or Demoſthenes; for the words, as well as the compoſition, are all plain and ſimple, without trope or figure, or adſcititious ornament of any kind. And it is full of the τὸ ἦθικον, or *ethic*, which is the chief ornament of this kind of ſtyle, and is more perſuaſive, at leaſt among the people, both in narrative and argument, than any thing elſe belonging to ſtyle, becauſe it touches the heart more *.

Among the moſt perfect models of this kind of ſtyle were the authors of the new comedy in Athens, particularly Menander. His comedies are now unfortunately loſt; but in Terence we have excellent imitations of them, or rather tranſlations; for the Romans, when they firſt began to write, ſtuck ſo cloſe to the Greek originals, that they tranſlated them. And Donatus, the commentator upon Terence, tells us, that Terence would have valued himſelf leſs upon

* Dionyſ. the Halicarnaſſian περὶ τῆς Δημοσθένους δεινότητος c. 12. and 13.

Digitized by Google

writing a comedy of his own, than upon tranſlating from the Greek. The ſtyle of Terence is, in good Latinity, called *purus ſermo.* Thus Julius Cæſar, in his verſes upon Terence *, calls him *puri ſermonis amator;* and Terence himſelf, in the prologue to the *Heautontimorumenos*, calls the ſtyle of that comedy *pura oratio.* It is called, I think, with propriety enough, *pure*, as not being diſcoloured, or, as it were, *troubled* with tropes and figures, but altogether ſimple and of one colour. For though, in every good ſtyle, there ſhould be one colour predominant, there is in other ſtyles a mixture to a certain degree. For example, though the general colour of the ſtyle of Homer be the high heroic, yet, in many paſſages, where the ſubject requires it, the ſtyle is perfectly ſimple, as ſimple as that of Terence's comedies. And it is a fault in Virgil's Eneid, that there is little or no variety of ſtyle, all of it having more or leſs of the heroic ſwell. In ſuch works, a poet muſt know how to vary properly the colour of his ſtyle:

* See Suetonius's Life of Terence.

Digitized by Google

Deſcriptas ſervare vices, operumque colores
Cur ego, ſi nequeo ignoroque, poëta ſalutor?

Whereas, in the comedy of Terence, the ſtyle is all of the ſame colour, that is, perfectly ſimple, without any tumor or ſwell; or, if there be any thing of that kind upon any particular occaſion, it is noted as ſomething extraordinary. As when Chremes, in the *Heautontimorumenos*, being extremely provoked againſt his ſon for his diſorderly life, accoſts him in this way:

——Non ſi ex capite ſis meo
Natus, item ut aiunt Minervam eſſe ex Jove, ea cauſa magis,
Patiar, Clitipho, flagitiis tuis me infamem fieri;
Act. v. ſc. 4.

Which makes Horace ſay,

Interdum tamen et vocem comœdia tollit,
Iratuſque Chremes tumido delitigat ore *.

* The diction of Terence was, I believe, as *pure* as that of Menander; and, indeed, it appears to me, that there can be nothing purer. But his fable, and the texture to his pieces, was not near ſo pure. For he tells us, in more than one place, *Prol. Andr. et Prol. Heautontim.* that his adverſaries accuſed him of *contaminating* his fables, that is, of joining two Greek fables together, and in that way, as they ſaid, making one bad Latin piece out of two Greek ones. And Donatus has obſerved, in his Com. on the

Digitized by Google

To diſtinguiſh this ſtyle from the low and the vulgar, is a matter of pretty nice judgment; for that is the extreme which it borders upon; and we ſee from Terence's prologue to the Phormio, that his pieces were ſaid, by his adverſaries, to be written

Andrian, that, beſides one young man, Pamphilus, and his ſlave *Davus*, there is another young man, viz. *Charinus*, introduced, and another ſlave, *Byrrhia*, who are not to be found in the Andrian of Menander; *in Andr. act.* 2. *ſc.* 1. And, in general, we may obſerve, that, in all Terence's comedies, there is ſomething of a double plot; for there are commonly two young men, two fathers, two miſtreſſes, and two cunning ſlaves. Terence, in thoſe prologues I have quoted, does not deny the charge, and only juſtifies himſelf by the example of the comic poets before him, ſuch as Plautus and Cæcilius. And the truth appears to have been, that ſo perfect a ſimplicity as that of Menander's pieces, would not have pleaſed the taſte of the Romans of that time, which was little better than barbarous; for the taſte of all barbarous nations delights much more in variety than in ſimplicity and uniformity. Thus we ſee what a variety there is in the Gothic architecture; not a gate, not a window, hardly a capital of a pillar, ornamented like another; and it was the ſame in the writing art. Before Shakeſpeare's time, there was a tragedy called *Cambyſes*, which bore in its title to be *a moſt lamentable tragedy, full of excellent mirth*; and in Shakeſpeare's own tragedies, there is not wanting mirth ſufficient, but not always *excellent*, whether it were his own taſte, or only compliance with the barbarous taſte of his time.

Digitized by Google

tenui oratione et ſcriptura levi, that is, in a ſtyle too ſimple, and too little raiſed. But not only the learned critic, but even a man of good natural taſte, will perceive the difference. And, however eaſy it may ſeem to imitate ſuch a ſtyle, any one who tries it will find, that it is true what Horace ſays,

——— Sudet multum, fruſtraque laboret
Auſus idem.———

And, indeed, take the ſtyle of Terence altogether, the expreſſion of characters and manners in it, as well as the elegance and wonderful ſimplicity, I do not know but it is more difficult to imitate than even the ſtyle of Homer.

The author, in Engliſh, that has excelled the moſt in this ſtyle is Dr. Swift, in his *Gulliver's Travels*; of which the narrative is wonderfully plain and ſimple, minute likewiſe, and circumſtantial, ſo much, as to be diſguſting to a reader without taſte or judgment, and the character of an Engliſh ſailor is finely kept up in it. In ſhort, it has every virtue belonging to this ſtyle; and I will venture to ſay, that thoſe monſtrous

Digitized by Google

lies ſo narrated, have more the air of probability than many a true ſtory unſkilfully told. And, accordingly, I have been informed, that they impoſed upon many when they were firſt publiſhed. The voyage to Lilliput, in my judgment, is the fineſt of them all, eſpecially in what relates to the politics of that kingdom, and the ſtate of parties there. The debate in the King's council, concerning Gulliver, is a maſter-piece; and the original papers it contains, of which he ſays he was ſo lucky as to get copies, give it an air of probability that is really wonderful. When we add to all this, the hidden ſatire which it contains, and the grave ridicule that runs through the whole of it, the moſt exquiſite of all ridicule, I think I do not go too far when I pronounce it the moſt perfect work of the kind, antient or modern, that is to be found. For, as to Lucian's true hiſtory, which is the only antient work of the kind that has come down to us, it has nothing to recommend it, except the imitation of the grave ſtyle of the antient hiſtorians, ſuch as Herodotus; but it wants the ſatire and exquiſite ridicule that is to be found in the Dean's work.

Digitized by Google

This plain ſtyle is not, as I have obſerved elſewhere, much uſed in our proſe compoſitions, and is altogether out of faſhion in our verſe. But it was not ſo in the days of Milton, as I have already ſhewn, by examples from him, and ſhall ſhew, by examples from others of our antient poets, when I come to ſpeak of the ſtyle of poetry.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

Of the ornamented ſtyle—This divided into two kinds, the auſtere and the florid.—Of the firſt kind is the ſtyle of Thucydides.—Character of that ſtyle.—Of the ſtyle of Salluſt.

THE oppoſite ſtyle to the ſimple is that which is highly ornamented, and I divide it into two kinds; for the ornaments are either of the grave and ſevere kind, or of the gay and florid. Of the firſt ſort is the ſtyle of Thucydides, the moſt extraordinary, perhaps, that is to be found; and, as the Halicarnaſſian ſays, the firſt and laſt of the kind; for at the time the Halicarnaſſian wrote, no other hiſtorian had attempted to imitate him, nor any orator, except in part*. And, ſince the days of the Halicarnaſſian,

* De Thucydide judicium, c. 52. et 53.

Digitized by Google

few, I believe, have understood him, but none set him up as a model of imitation. The singularity of his style is not so much in the choice of words, which, however, were many of them obsolete and unusual, even at the time he wrote, as in the composition, which is so varied by every figure of construction and arrangement, many more than the grammarians have found names for, that he may be said to have rung all the changes possible upon words. His sense in the narrative part of his history is, I think, plain enough; but, in his speeches, the sentences and arguments are often so crouded and complicated together, as to be a perfect riddle. His numbers are austere, and often harsh and uncouth, cheating the ear by abrupt clausules. But, though his style be thus singular, and more a *made* style, as I may call it, than any that I know in prose, yet it is still prose, and not poetry; nor can we deny that it is the style of history, though of an extraordinary kind; for the narrative is altogether historical, without being loaded with epithets, or adorned with poetical descriptions, which is generally the case of our modern histories; nor

Digitized by Google

does it attempt, in any way, to excite the paſſions of the reader, or to inſtruct him by reflections on events or the characters of men. And as to the ſpeeches, all we can ſay of them is, that the rhetoric of them is of an extraordinary kind, and that we could have wiſhed the ſame ſenſe to have been delivered in plain words.

Salluſt, the Roman hiſtorian, is commonly reckoned an imitator of Thucydides; and no doubt he had read and ſtudied him, for ſome of the beſt ſentences in his book are taken from him. And his ſtyle, ſo far as concerns the choice of words, reſembles that of Thucydides; for he uſes antiquated words, and common words in an unuſual ſenſe. But his compoſition is very different; for Thucydides compoſes in long periods, very often too long, and ſometimes much involved and implicated, ſo as to be exceedingly obſcure; then his compoſition is all connected, both the periods, and the ſeveral members of periods. On the other hand, Salluſt writes in ſhort ſentences, abundantly clear and perſpicuous, but unconnected with one another, and the differ-

Digitized by Google

rent parts of the ſame ſentence likewiſe without connection; ſo that his compoſition is gaping and disjointed, and, in ſome places, hardly deſerves the name of compoſition. Nor is there any author, that I know, that abounds ſo much in a figure, well known among the grammarians under the name of *Aſyndeton*. He is the firſt, as far as I know, Greek or Roman, who affected this character of ſtyle. We ſee the authors before him uſing the figure above-mentioned upon occaſions; but a whole hiſtory, or any other work, written all in that ſtyle, was a thing unknown before his time. For it is not in his ſpeeches only that he uſes this figure ſo much, but in his narrative, his reflections, and characters, with which he abounds; ſo that there is wanting in Salluſt that diverſity of compoſition which we obſerve in Thucydides, whoſe ſtyle in his narrative is exceedingly different from what it is in his ſpeeches. As to characters and reflections, Thucydides does not deal in them; for that was ſomething new with reſpect to the matter, which Salluſt appears firſt to have introduced into hiſtory. Before his

Digitized by Google

time, this ſpecies of writing confined itſelf to the narrating of facts, leaving the reader to form his own reflections upon them, as well as to judge from them of the characters of men.

This cenſure of Salluſt's ſtyle will, I know, be thought by many too ſevere: It may not, therefore, be improper to ſupport my judgment by examples, which will ſhew, that, in all the four parts of his work above-mentioned, and which comprehend the whole of it, viz. the narrative, the reflections, characters, and ſpeeches, the ſame incoherent and disjointed ſtyle, the ſame *ſand without lime*, is to be found.

In the introduction to his hiſtory of Catiline's conſpiracy, ſpeaking of the Romans in the earlieſt times of the commonwealth, he ſays, 'Romani, domi militiæque intenti, 'feſtinare, parare, alius alium hortari, hoſtibus obviam ire, libertatem, patriam, 'parenteſque armis tegere.' In the ſame introduction, ſpeaking of his countrymen in later times, he ſays, 'Igitur ex divitiis 'juventutem luxuriâ atque avaritiâ cum

Digitized by Google

'ſuperbia invaſêre; rapere, conſumere; ſua 'parvi pendere, aliena cupere; pudorem, 'pudicitiam, divina atque humana promiſ-'cua, nihil penſi atque moderati habere.' In the deſcription of a battle, which Jugurtha fought with Metellus, he writes thus: 'Numidæ alii poſtremos cædere; pars a 'ſiniſtra ac dextera tentare; infenſi adeſſe 'atque inſtare; omnibus locis Romanorum 'ordines conturbare;' c. 50. de bello Jug. And again, in his account of the ſame action, 'Cæterum facies totius negotii varia, 'incerta, fœda atque miſerabilis; diſperſi 'a ſuis pars cedere, alii inſequi; neque ſig-'na, neque ordines obſervare; ubi quem-'que periculum ceperat, ibi reſiſtere ac 'propulſare; arma, tela, equi, viri, hoſtes, 'cives permixti; nihil conſilio, neque im-'perio agi; fors omnia regere;' c. 51. Theſe may ſuffice for ſpecimens of his narrative ſtyle. In his reflections, or what may be called the philoſophy of his hiſtory, the ſtyle is of the ſame kind. 'Avaritia fidem, 'probitatem, cæteraſque artis bonas ſubver-'tit; pro his ſuperbiam, crudelitatem, deos 'negligere, omnia venalia habere edocuit. 'Ambitio multos mortales falſos fieri ſube-

Digitized by Google

'git; aliud clauſum in pectore, aliud in 'lingua promptum habere; amicitias ini-'micitiaſque non ex re, ſed ex commodo 'æſtumare; magiſque vultum, quàm inge-'nium bonum habere;' Bell. Cat. c. 10. His characters are as deficient in copulatives as either his narrative or his reflections. For proof of this I need go no farther than the character of Catiline, in the beginning of his hiſtory of that conſpiracy: 'Corpus pa-'tiens inediæ, vigiliæ, algoris, ſupra quam 'cuique credibile eſt. Animus audax, ſubdo-'lus, varius, cujus rei libet ſimulator ac diſſi-'mulator; alieni appetens, ſui profuſus; 'ardens in cupiditatibus; ſatis loquentiæ, 'ſapientiæ parum. Vaſtus animus, immo-'derata, incredibilia, nimis alta ſemper cu-'piebat;' c. 5. In his characters of Cæſar and Cato, he has joined to this ſhort and disjointed compoſition a ſtring of *antitheſes*: 'Cæſar 'beneficiis ac munificentia magnus habeba-'tur; integritate vitæ Cato. Ille manſue-'tudine et miſericordia clarus factus; huic 'ſeveritas dignitatem addiderat. Cæſar 'dando, ſublevando, ignoſcendo; Cato ni-'hil largiundo gloriam adeptus; in altero 'miſeris perfugium, in altero malis perni-

Digitized by Google

'cies; illius facilitas, hujus conſtantia lau-
'dabatur;' c. 54.

The rhetorical ſtyle leaſt of all admits of this gaping compoſition, becauſe it demands a flow, and a roundneſs, proper to fill the ears of the people. Yet Salluſt is the ſame in his ſpeeches, or very little different from what he is in the other parts of his work. What orator of Greece or Rome, that had any reputation, ever began an oration to the people in the manner that Salluſt makes Memmius the tribune begin his: 'Multa 'dehortantur a vobis, Quirites, ni ſtudium 'reipublicæ omnia ſuperet; opes factionis, 'veſtra patientia, jus nullum; ac maxume 'quod innocentiæ plus periculi, quam ho-'noris eſt;' de Bell. Jug. c. 31. If he had not put this ſtyle into the mouth of Memmius, who, he tells us, at that time was a great and powerful orator, I ſhould have thought that what he makes Marius ſay to the people, was an attempt to imitate his rude and incompoſed manner of ſpeaking; for he was intirely unlearned, and a profeſſed deſpiſer of the Greek arts. He makes him ſpeak thus: 'Non ſunt compoſita ver-

Digitized by Google

'ba mea; parum id facio; ipſa ſe virtus 'ſatis oſtendit; illis artificio opus eſt, uti 'turpia facta oratione tegant: Neque litteras 'Græcas didici; parum placebat eas diſcere, 'quippe quæ ad virtutem doctoribus nihil 'profuerunt. At illa multo optuma reipubli-'cæ doctus ſum; hoſtem ferire, præſidia 'agitare; nihil metuere, niſi turpem fa-'mam; hyemem et æſtatem juxta pati; hu-'mi requieſcere; eodem tempore inopiam et 'laborem tolerare;' c. 85. But it is evident that the ſtyle of this ſpeech, no leſs than of every other ſpeech in the book, is intirely his own.

Not only in the ſpeeches, but in every part of an hiſtorical work, ſuch a bounding hopping compoſition is unſuitable: *Firſt*, becauſe it has no ſweetneſs or flow; and, *ſecondly*, becauſe it has no gravity or dignity, ſuch as the hiſtorical ſtyle requires: Nor do I know any kind of writing that it is fit for, except the epiſtolary, which ought to have the air of being unpremeditated, without ſtudy of compoſition or ornament of any kind. Salluſt has preſerved to us an original letter of Lentulus, one of Catiline's aſſociates, written in that manner.

Digitized by Google

It was addreſſed to Catiline, and is in theſe words: 'Quis ſim, ex eo quem ad te miſi 'cognoſces; fac cogites in quanta calamitate 'ſis, et memineris te virum; conſideres 'quid tuæ rationes poſtulent: Auxilium 'petas ab omnibus, etiam ab infimis;' de Bell. Cat. 43. This is a very proper ſtyle for a letter; but, I think, very improper for a hiſtory; nor is it juſtifiable by any good authority. For, except Salluſt and Tacitus, no antient hiſtorian has uſed it; nor orator or poet, except upon particular occaſions. But, though I be thus ſevere upon the ſtyle of Salluſt, it muſt not be imagined that I think meanly of him as an hiſtorian; for I eſteem his matter as much as I blame his ſtyle. His narrative, though, I think, ill compoſed, is clear and diſtinct; his reflections are ſenſible and judicious, particularly thoſe upon the ſtate of the Roman commonwealth, and the manners of that people. For, as to his philoſophy, I think it is no better than common place; and, though it had been better, I think it might have been ſpared. His ſpeeches are, in my judgment, by far the beſt part of

Digitized by Google

the work; and there are more ſplendid ſentences to be picked from them than from thoſe of any hiſtorian or orator that I know. Julius Cæſar's ſpeech in the ſenate, upon the ſubject of the puniſhment to be inflicted on the conſpirators, is a maſter-piece; nor do I know any thing of the kind, antient or modern, in which there are arguments more plauſible, or ſentences of greater weight and gravity. And, though the compoſition be clearly his own, and not that of Cæſar, I am perſuaded the matter is from Cæſar. Thus much, at leaſt, we are ſure of, from Cicero's ſpeech on the ſame occaſion, that what he makes Julius ſay of a future ſtate, was actually ſaid by him.

This opinion of Salluſt, and the difference I make betwixt his ſpeeches and the reſt of his hiſtory, appears to have been the judgment of the critics of his own time, at leaſt, of the next age; for ſo I underſtand a paſſage in Seneca the rhetorician's declamations, Lib. 3. in præfatione, where, ſpeaking of the different talents of men, he ſays, 'Virgil's happy genius forſook him in proſe,

Digitized by Google

'Cicero's eloquence deſerted him in verſe;' then he adds, 'Orationes Salluſtii in hono-'rem hiſtoriarum leguntur:' The ſenſe of which words I take to be, that it was chiefly his orations which did honour to his hiſtory.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XII.

Of the ſtyle of Tacitus—That ſtyle conſidered by many as a model—Not an original ſtyle, but an imitation of Salluſt.—General obſervations upon it—Particular examples—Of his unconnected compoſition—Of abrupt and harſh—Of obſcure brevity—Of affectation in the expreſſion, and obſcurity thence ariſing—Compared in this reſpect with Julius Cæſar.—Poetical diction of Tacitus—Poetical deſcription—Quaintneſs and affectation of ſmartneſs.—Praiſe of Tacitus as to his matter—Some things alſo in his ſtyle commendable.—Effect that the imitation of him has had upon the ſtyle of modern writers.—The beſt imitation of him is in Mr. Mallet's Life of Chancellor Bacon.

THE next author I ſhall mention, remarkable for the kind of ſtyle of which I am now ſpeaking, is Tacitus, an author of ſo high reputation at preſent, that

Digitized by Google

I have thought proper to beſtow an intire chapter upon him. No body ever thought of ſetting him up for a model of ſtyle, till Juſtus Lipſius brought him into faſhion, and, by imitating him, wrote a ſtyle very different from that of the other ſcholars of the age, and different even from what he himſelf wrote in his younger days. From that time Tacitus has been the model of the French writers, as many of them as had learning enough to underſtand him, and of a great many Britiſh, who have imitated him either directly from the original, or at ſecond-hand from the French. What I ſhall ſay, therefore, of his ſtyle will not, I know, pleaſe the many; but for them, as I have more than once ſaid, I do not write.

Tacitus himſelf was no original, though the contrary is generally believed; for he plainly imitates the author laſt mentioned, Salluſt. This is evident, not only from particular obſolete words and phraſes, which he has borrowed from Salluſt, as has been obſerved by the commentators, but from the general colour and complexion of his

Digitized by Google

ſtyle *. And, indeed, there was at that time no other hiſtorian, either Greek or Latin, who had written in that ſtyle; for, as I obſerved before, the compoſition of Thucydides, though affecting the ſame character of ſtyle, is very different from that of Salluſt, or his imitator Tacitus.

Beſides this imitation of Salluſt, there is in Tacitus a great tincture of the ſtyle of the ſchools of declamation, the faſhionable

* I will give two or three examples of this.—Every body who has ſtudied Salluſt knows, that the ſtyle in which he deſcribes characters is remarkable: Here is one from Tacitus, which is plainly an imitation of that manner. It is the character of Sejanus: 'Corpus illi laborum tolerans; animus audax, ſui obtegens, in alios criminator; juxta adulatio et ſuperbia; palam compoſitus pudor; intus ſumma apiſcendi libido;' Ann. Lib. iv. c. 1. The character of Galba is given in the ſame manner by antitheſis: 'Pecuniæ alienæ non appetens, ſuæ parcus, publicæ avarus;' Hiſt. Lib. i. c. 49. His deſcriptions too are often in the ſtyle of Salluſt, that is, in ſingle unconnected words, as in the deſcription of the rout of an army: 'Non arma, non ordo, non conſilium; ſed pecorum modo, trahi, occidi, capi;' Ann. Lib. i. c. 25. In the ſame manner Salluſt deſcribes the ſame thing: 'Sequi, fugere, occidi, capi, equi, viri, adflicti;' B. Jug. c. 101.

Digitized by Google

ſtyle, as I ſhall afterwards obſerve, of that age; and it is from thence chiefly that the differences to be obſerved betwixt his ſtyle and that of Salluſt, in whoſe time the declamatory ſtyle was not ſo much in faſhion, ariſe.

There is one fault in the ſtyle of Tacitus which is obvious, and will ſtrike every man of ſenſe, though he have not ſtudied the rules of writing. It is this, that he draws our attention too much to his ſtyle. This is ſo true, that I will venture to affirm, that a man who had only ſtudied the great antient maſters of compoſition, ſuch as Demoſthenes, Cicero, Julius Cæſar, or any other who has written in a plain natural manner, would at firſt, when he came to the reading of Tacitus, be employed almoſt intirely about the words, wondering at the ſtrangeneſs of the compoſition, ſo different from what he had been accuſtomed to, or, perhaps, admiring and falling in love with it, as Lipſius did.

Now, the greateſt praiſe, in my opinion, that can be beſtowed upon any ſtyle is, that

Digitized by Google

we are carried away by the ſenſe and argument, without attending to the words. This is the peculiar praiſe of Demoſthenes, whoſe words are all of common uſe, and ſeem only put together in ſuch a way as to convey the meaning clearly and diſtinctly. Nor, unleſs we know ſomething of the critical art, do we perceive any art at all in a compoſition, the moſt artificial which is to be found in proſe. The beauties, therefore, of Demoſthenes's ſtyle are, of all others, the moſt genuine, being ſuch as are not *prominent*, and do not ſtick out, as it were, from the body of the work—'Quæ non 'extra corpus orationis eminent,' to uſe the expreſſion of a very elegant writer *, but are ſo incorporated with it, that, though the effects of them be felt by every one, the art is only perceived by the critic—'Grandis, 'et, ut ita dicam, pudica oratio non eſt 'maculoſa, nec turgida, ſed naturali pul-'chritudine exſurgit †.' Now, this natural beauty of ſtyle is certainly not predominant in Tacitus; but, on the contrary, it is evident, that he ſtudies, like Mr. Bayes in the

* Petron. Arbit. Satyric. † Id. Ibid.

Digitized by Google

Rehearſal, to *elevate and ſurpriſe* by a kind of compoſition, which is any thing but plain and natural. And, if the art of Tacitus's ſtyle were good, which, I think, it is not, it is too conſpicuous; ſo that he wants the greateſt art of all in ſpeaking and writing, which is to conceal art.

Another general obſervation I would make upon Tacitus's ſtyle is, that though the chief thing to be ſtudied in compoſition is not the pleaſure of the ear, nor what is called a flow of words, yet that is not to be neglected; and much leſs ought a writer to affect to diſtinguiſh himſelf by a compoſition abrupt and gaping, and altogether harſh and offenſive to the ear; and yet this is the moſt diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of Tacitus's ſtyle, and in this he has far ſurpaſſed his original, it being generally the fate of imitators, that, if there be any fault in the model, they aggravate and make it worſe.

I will now proceed to give examples of the peculiarities of Tacitus's ſtyle, as I did of thoſe of Salluſt, beginning with his un-

Digitized by Google

connected compoſition, ſo unconnected, abrupt, and broken, that it hardly deſerves the name of *compoſition*. My firſt example ſhall be the very beginning of his work, I mean his introduction to his *Annals*, where one ſhould have expected ſome kind of flow and ſmoothneſs of compoſition, ſuch as we find in other authors, even in thoſe who, in other parts of their work, ſtudy compoſition very little *. He begins thus: 'Urbem Romam a principio reges 'habuêre. Libertatem et conſulatum L. 'Brutus inſtituit. Dictaturæ ad tempus 'ſumebantur; neque Decemviralis poteſtas 'ultra biennium, neque tribunorum mili-'tum conſulare jus diu valuit. Non Cin-'næ, non Sullæ longa dominatio; et Pom-'peii Craſſique potentia cito in Cæſarem; 'Lepidi atque Antonii arma, in Auguſtum

* Ariſtotle, in his abſtruſe philoſophical works, which he intended only for the uſe of his ſcholars, has nothing that can be called *compoſition*, though it deſerves that name as well as a great part of Tacitus's hiſtory. But, in his popular works, and particularly in the exordiums of them, there is very good compoſition, as in the beginning of his book of poetry.

Digitized by Google

ceſſere.' In what he calls his hiſtory, where it is commonly thought, but, in my judgment, without reaſon, that the compoſition is more copious and flowing, he enters upon his ſubject in this manner: 'Opus aggredior opimum caſibus, atrox 'præliis, diſcors ſeditionibus, ipſa etiam 'pace ſævum. Quatuor principes ferro in-'terempti. Tria bella civilia, plura exter-'na, ac plerumque permixta. Proſperæ in 'oriente, adverſæ in occidente res. Tur-'batum Illyricum; Galliæ nutantes; per-'domita Britannia, et ſtatim miſſa; coortæ 'in nos. Sarmatarum ac Suevorum gentes, 'nobilitatus cladibus mutuis Dacus. Mota 'etiam prope Parthorum arma falſi Nero-'nis ludibrio. Jam verò Italia novis clади-'bus, vel poſt longam ſæculorum ſeriem 'repetitis, afflicta. Hauſtæ aut obrutæ ur-'bes fœcundiſſima Campaniæ ora. Et urbs 'incendiis vaſtata, conſumptis antiquiſſimis 'delubris, ipſo capitolio civium manibus 'incenſo. Pollutæ cærimoniæ; magna 'adulteria; plenum exiliis mare; infecti 'cædibus ſcopuli; atrocius in urbe ſævitum.' A little after ſpeaking of prodigies that happened about that time,—'Cœlo terraque

Digitized by Google

'prodigia, et fulminum monitus, et futu-
'rorum præſagia, læta, triſtia, ambigua,
'manifeſta.' Upon this paſſage, I cannot help ſetting down the remark of his tranſlator and great admirer, Mr. Gordon. 'In 'this,' ſays he, 'there is an infinite pathos. 'What can be more ſolemn, ſounding, and 'ſublime, even in Lucretius?'

Let any man compare theſe exordiums of Tacitus with the exordium of Livy, or even of Thucydides, whoſe ſtyle Tacitus is thought by ſome to have imitated, and the difference will appear ſtriking; and let him compare them, at the ſame time, with the exordiums of Salluſt, and he will perceive a great reſemblance, and that it is Salluſt whom he has imitated in this disjointed ſtyle, and not Thucydides.

The narrative of hiſtory ſhould certainly be put together with ſome kind of art; and there ſhould be a certain dignity in the compoſition, as well as the words. But Tacitus narrates in this manner in his hiſtory, for from thence I chuſe to take my examples, for the reaſon above given: 'In-

Digitized by Google

'terim civilis vetera circumsedit. Vocula 'Geldubam, atque inde Novesium concessit. 'Civilis capit Geldubam. Mox haud pro- 'cul Novesio, equestri prælio prosperè 'certabit *.' Again—'Nec Sequani detrec- 'tavêre certamen. Fortuna melioribus af- 'fuit. Fusi Lingones, Sabinus festinatum 'temerè prælium, pari formidine dese- 'ruit †,' &c. To quote more would be to transcribe a great part of the work.

Such short sentences, or rather mutilated sentences, *amputatæ sententiæ*, as Seneca calls them ‡, can be said with propriety to be only the materials of composition: And, had there been nothing preserved of Tacitus but a few fragments of this kind, and if I had not known his taste of style, and manner of writing, I should have thought that these were only heads, or memorandums of what he was afterwards to put together in regular composition.

* Histor. Lib. iv. c. 36.

† Ibid. c. 67.

‡ Senec. Philos. Epist. 114.

Digitized by Google

In the ſpeeches there is ſomething more of compoſition; but theſe likewiſe are, for the greater part, cut into ſhort ſentences, commonly in the form of interrogation, after the manner of the ſchools of declamation. Thus the Pannonian legions, when they mutinied, were addreſſed by their officers: 'Quouſque filium imperatoris obſidebimus? Quis certaminum finis? Percennione et Vibuleno ſacramentum dicturi ſumus? Percennius et Vibulenus ſtipendia militibus, agros emeritis largientur? Denique, pro Neronibus et Druſis imperium populi Romani capeſſent? Quin potius ut noviſſimi in culpam, ita primi ad pœnitentiam ſumus? Tarda ſunt quæ in commune expoſtulantur: Privatam gratiam ſtatim mereare, ſtatim recipias *.'

In ſome of the paſſages I have quoted, the ſentences are not only ſhort, but abrupt, and ending harſhly and unexpectedly; ſo that we may apply to him what Seneca the rhetorician ſays of the ſtyle of Fabianus, a declaimer of his time: 'Quædam tam ſu-

* Annal. Lib. i. c. 28.

Digitized by Google

'bito desinunt, ut non brevia sint sed abrup-'ta *.' And what Seneca the philosopher says, speaking of the composition of certain writers of his time,—'Quidam præfractam 'et asperam probant, disturbant de industria, 'si quid placidius effluxit. Nolunt sine 'salebra esse juncturam; virilem putant et 'fortem quæ aurem inæqualitate percu-'tiat †.' Of this I will only give two more instances, out of innumerable that might be given: For it is evident that he affected those harsh clausules, having a pleasure, as it would seem, to surprise the reader, by disappointing his expectation, and cheating his ear. In giving the character of one Vinius, he says, that he was—'Audax, calli-'dus, promptus, et prout animum intendisset 'pravus aut industrius eâdem vi ‡.' Again, in giving an account of what Antonius the general of Vitellius said to his troops, when they were in possession of Verona, which they had a mind to sack and pillage, and

* Lib. ii. Controvers. in initio.

† Epistol. 114.

‡ Histor. Lib. i. c. 48.

Digitized by Google

accordingly afterwards did ſo, he ſays, 'Vocatos ad concionem Antonius alloquitur 'magnificè victores, victos clementer, de 'Cremona in neutrum *.' Where, in order to make the laſt member of the ſentence as ſhort and abrupt as poſſible, he has made it obſcure; for you muſt be well acquainted with Tacitus's idioms, to know that, by the expreſſion *de Cremona neutrum*, he means that Antonius ſaid nothing at all of Cremona, neither in the way of praiſe or cenſure, intending, as the event ſhewed, to leave the ſoldiers to follow their own inclination with reſpect to that town.

And this leads me to obſerve another fault in Tacitus's ſtyle, namely, an *obſcure brevity*. This, with the other peculiarities above-mentioned, is imputed to Salluſt by Seneca the philoſopher, in the epiſtle above quoted, in theſe words: 'Salluſtio vigente amputatæ ſententiæ, et ver'ba ante expectatam cadentiam, et obſcura 'brevitas fuere pro cultu.' And, as imitators commonly aggravate the faults of their

* Hiſtor. Lib. iii. c. 32.

Digitized by Google

original, ſo, compared with Tacitus, Salluſt may be ſaid to be a clear and perſpicuous writer. For Tacitus has ſo many ſhort and elliptical expreſſions, that he may be ſaid to write a kind of ſhort-hand ſtyle. Thus, ſpeaking of the diſſimulation and feigned behaviour of the Roman nobility, upon the deceaſe of Auguſtus, and the acceſſion of Tiberius, he ſays,—'Quanto quis illuſtrior, 'tanto magis falſi ac feſtinantes, vultuque 'compoſito, ne læti exceſſu Principis; neu 'triſtior primordio, lacrymas, gaudium, quæ-'ſtus, adulatione miſcebant*:' Where the word *primordio* has no meaning at all, unleſs we ſupply *principatus Tiberii*. Again, ſpeaking of Primus Antonius, the general of Vitellius, his behaviour after the taking of Cremona, he ſays,—'Primus Antonius 'nequaquam pari innocentia poſt Cremo-'nam agebat†:' Where, unleſs you ſupply the word *captam*, there is no ſenſe in the paſſage.

* Annal. Lib. i. c. 7.

† Hiſtor. Lib. iii. c. 49.

Digitized by Google

Another cauſe of obſcurity in this author is, the affectation of expreſſing common things in an uncommon manner; as where, ſpeaking of the wonders of Egypt, and particularly of the lake Mœris, he calls it 'Lacus effoſſa humo, ſuper-fluentis Nili re-'ceptaculum, atque alibi anguſtiæ, et pro-'funda altitudo, nullis inquirentium ſpatiis 'penetrabilis *:' Where all that is meant by this ſhort and obſcure ſentence is, that the lake Mœris was in ſome places wider, in ſome narrower, and, where it was narrow, it was of an unfathomable depth. Again, ſpeaking of one Celſus, who was accuſed before Otho the Emperor for his adherence to Galba, the preceeding Emperor, againſt whom Otho had riſen in rebellion and killed, he ſays,—'Celſus conſtanter 'ſervatæ erga Galbam fidei crimen confeſ-'ſus, exemplum ultro imputavit †:' Where the only difficulty that can be is in the manner of the expreſſion, not in the thing expreſſed. And the moſt probable meaning

* Annal. Lib. ii. c. 61.

† Hiſtor. Lib. i. c. 71.

Digitized by Google

that, I think, can be put upon the words (for, when an author ſo expreſſes himſelf, we can but gueſs at his meaning) is, that Celſus not only confeſſed his adherence to Galba, but reproached Otho for not ſhewing the ſame example of fidelity. Again, in deſcribing the bloody battle betwixt the troops of Vitellius and Otho, where the ſoldiers on the different ſides knew one another, he has theſe words: 'Noſcentes 'inter ſe, cæteris conſpicui, in eventum to-'tius belli certabant*:' Where the meaning plainly is, though Tacitus ſeems to have intended to conceal it from the reader, that the ſoldiers on the different ſides, knowing one another, and wanting to diſtinguiſh themſelves, fought each of them as if the whole fortune of the war had depended upon his ſingle valour. Again, in his treatiſe *de moribus Germanorum*, ſpeaking of the condition of freedmen among them, he ſays, 'Liberti non multum ſupra 'ſervos ſunt, raro aliquid momentum in 'domo, nunquam in civitate, exceptis dun-

* Hiſtor. Lib. ii. c. 42.

Digitized by Google

'taxat iis gentibus quæ regnantur; ibi 'enim et ſuper ingenuos, et ſuper nobiles 'aſcendunt, apud cæteros impares libertini 'libertatis argumentum ſunt*:' Where, from the context, and whole ſenſe of the paſſage, not from the words, the meaning appears to be, that in all thoſe German ſtates, except thoſe which were under regal government, the unequal condition of freedmen was a proof of the value of liberty. In the ſame place, a little after, ſpeaking of the German way of poſſeſſing their lands, he ſays, 'Agri pro numero cultorum ab 'univerſis per vices occupantur, quos mox 'inter ſe ſecundùm dignationem partiun-'tur.' This I never ſhould have underſtood, if I could not have explained it from the paſſage of an author who writes plainly and naturally; I mean Cæſar, who, in the account he has given us of the manners of the Germans, Lib. vi. de B. Gallico, tells us, that the magiſtrates among them made a diſtribution every year of a certain quantity of land to each tribe or family, and they no doubt would, as Tacitus ſays, ſubdivide

* Cap. 25.

Digitized by Google

it among themſelves, giving to each man according to his dignity. I will ſubjoin Cæſar's words, from which we may ſee the difference between a plain natural account of a thing, and the ſame account given with an affected and obſcure brevity: 'Agricul-'turæ non ſtudent; neque quiſquam agri 'modum certum ac fines proprios habet; 'ſed magiſtratus in annos ſingulos gentibus 'nationibuſque hominum, qui una coierunt, 'quantum eis et quo loco viſum eſt, attri-'buunt agri, atque anno poſt alio tranſire 'cogunt.' Again, in the ſame book, ſpeaking of the ſituation of the Catti in Germany, he has theſe words: 'Catti initium ſe-'dis ab Hercynio ſaltu inchoant, non ita 'effuſis ac paluſtribus locis, ut cæteræ ci-'vitates, in quas Germania pateſcit; durant 'ſi quidem colles, paulatimque rareſcunt; 'et Cattos ſuos ſaltus Hercynius proſequi-'tur ſimul atque deponit*.' The concluſion of this ſentence ſavours more of the operoſe diligence of the ſophiſt than of the gravity of the hiſtorian; for it expreſſes, in a quaint and artificial manner, a very plain

* Cap. 30.

Digitized by Google

and ſimple thing, namely, that the territory of the Catti extended along the Hercynian foreſt, and went no farther than that foreſt. And, laſtly, that I may not tire the reader with more examples of what, indeed, is to be ſeen in almoſt every page of Tacitus, in deſcribing the form of our iſland, 'Formam 'totius Britanniæ Livius veterum, Fabius 'Ruſticus recentium, eloquentiſſimi aucto-'res, oblongæ ſcutulæ vel bipenni aſſimi-'lavêre; et eſt ea facies citra Caledoniam, 'unde et in univerſum fama eſt trangreſ-'ſa*: Where the ſenſe is plain enough, namely, that the form of the ſouthern part of the iſland, terminated by the Frith of Forth, or the Scottiſh ſea, was aſcribed to the whole. But the expreſſion is not plain or natural, but has much of what the Greek critics call περιεργια σοφιστικη.

I have inſiſted the more upon this obſcurity in Tacitus, ariſing from an affectation to raiſe his ſtyle by an uncommon phraſeology, that I think it is one of the moſt diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of his

* Agricolæ vita, c. 10.

Digitized by Google

ſtyle. And the great difference in this reſpect between him and Thucydides is, that, though Thucydides be likewiſe obſcure, more obſcure, I think, than Tacitus, his obſcurity is all in his orations, ariſing from his perplexed and involved enthymemas. For his narrative is abundantly clear and perſpicuous; whereas the obſcurity of Tacitus is chiefly in his narrative, for he wants to adorn the plaineſt facts. Now an ornamented narrative can hardly be very accurate and diſtinct. And, as narrative is the moſt eſſential part of hiſtory, it is this which makes the commentaries of Julius Cæſar, or even the hiſtory of Livy, though his narrative be not near ſo plain as that of Julius, ſo much more valuable than the hiſtory of Tacitus.

Tacitus ſo far reſembles a modern author, that his proſe, in many places, is very poetical. Speaking of Germanicus's voyage, along the coaſt of Germany, he ſays, 'Ac 'primo placidum æquor mille navium re-'mis ſtrepere, aut velis impelli *.' This is

* Annal. Lib. ii. c. 23.

Digitized by Google

poetical painting, not hiſtorical narrative. Again, ſpeaking of the ſoil of Germany, he ſays, 'Terra ſatis ferax, frugiferarum ar-'borum impatiens, pecorum fœcunda, ſed 'plerumque improcera, ne armentis qui-'dem ſuus honor, aut gloria frontis *.' And, a little after, ſpeaking of the culture of the lands in Germany, he tells us, that they do not cultivate the fruits of the garden; and he adds, 'Sola terræ ſeges imperatur †.' Again, ſpeaking of the rebuilding of the capitol under Veſpaſian, which had been burnt in the civil war betwixt him and Vitellius, he tells us, that, among other things that were thrown into the foundation of it, there were ores of different kinds, which he expreſſes in this manner: 'Metallorum 'primitiæ nullis fornacibus victæ, ſed ut 'gignuntur ‡.' In theſe examples the diction is altogether poetical, ſuch as is not to be found even among orators, who write

* De Mor. Germ. c. 5.

† Ibid. c. 26.

‡ Hiſt. Lib. iv. c. 53.

Digitized by Google

chaſtely and correctly, but it is not to be tolerated in an hiſtorian. He abounds alſo with poetical deſcriptions, ſome of them drawn out to a great length: Such is that deſcribing the field of battle, where Varus and his legions fell: 'Prima Vari caſtra lato ambitu, et dimenſis principiis, trium legionum manus oſtentabant; dein ſemiruto valla, humili foſſa, acciſæ jam reliquiæ conſediſſe intelligebantur: Medio campi albentia oſſa, ut fugerant, ut reſtiterant, disjecta vel aggerata; adjacebant fragmina telorum, equorumque artus, ſimul truncis arborum antefixa ora, lucis propinquis barbaræ aræ, apud quas tribunos, ac primorum ordinum centuriones mactaverant. Et cladis ejus ſuperſtites, pugnam aut vincula elapſi, referebant, *hic cecidiſſe legatos; illic raptas aquilas; primum ubi vulnus Varo adactum; ubi infelix dextra, et ſuo ictu mortem invenerit; quo tribunali concionatus Arminius; quot patibula captivis, quæ ſcrobes; utque ſignis et aquilis per ſuperbiam inluſerit* *.' It is in

* Annal. Lib. i. c. 61.

Digitized by Google

this way that Virgil paints the field of battle before Troy:

> Hic Dolopum manus, hic ſævus tendebat Achilles;
> Claſſibus hic locus; hic acies certare ſolebant.
>
> ÆN. ii. v. 29.

Tacitus's poetry is here the leſs excuſeable, that the defeat of Varus and his legions was an event that did not fall within the period of his hiſtory, having happened ſeveral years before. But he has another deſcription which belongs to his ſubject; and, as it is leſs poetical, is for that reaſon more beautiful, and ſuch as, I think, may be tolerated, if not praiſed, by the ſevereſt critic. It is where he deſcribes a moſt dangerous ſedition and mutiny of the German legions, upon the death of Auguſtus, which roſe to ſuch a height, that Germanicus, who commanded them, was obliged to ſend away his wife and infant ſon, who happened to be at that time in the winter-quarters of the legions. Their leaving the camp, and the effect that had upon the minds of the ſoldiers, is thus finely deſcribed: 'Incedebat muliebre et miſerabile agmen, profuga ducis uxor parvulum ſinu filium ge-

Digitized by Google

'rens; lamentantes circum amicorum con-
'juges, quæ ſimul trahebantur; nec minus
'triſtes qui manebant. Non florentis Cæ-
'ſaris, neque ſuis in caſtris, ſed velut in ur-
'be victa facies, gemituſque ac planctus,
'etiam militum aures oraque advertere.
'Progrediuntur contuberniis: *Quis ille fle-*
'*bilis ſonus? Quod tam triſte? Fœminas il-*
'*luſtres, non centurionem ad tutelam, non*
'*militem, nihil imperatoriæ uxoris, aut co-*
'*mitatûs ſoliti, pergere ad Treveros, et ex-*
'*ternæ fidei* *.' This is a picture well deſigned, and exceedingly well coloured; and, indeed, it appears to me, that in ſuch deſcriptions Tacitus indulged his genius, which, I think, was as much adapted to poetry as to hiſtory. But it is one of thoſe *dulcia vitia*, againſt which I would warn all writers of hiſtory; for, if the writer happens to be a dull man, and of a genius not favoured by the Muſes, he will make a ſorry piece of it; and, if he have a poetical genius, and ſucceed, though he may gain popular applauſe, he will probably not pleaſe

* Annal. Lib. i. c. 40, 41.

Digitized by Google

a good judge of writing, who will think the deſcriptions miſplaced, and unſuitable to the nature of the work, giving to hiſtory the air of romance. And, in fact, it always happens, that there are many circumſtances in ſuch deſcriptions either altogether feigned, or much exaggerated, which makes the faith of the author ſuſpected in other things.

The laſt fault I ſhall obſerve in Tacitus's ſtyle is alſo one which is much imitated by modern writers, and greatly admired by moſt readers; and that is a ſmart and unexpected turn which he gives to the thought, as well as the expreſſion: As where, ſpeaking of the mathematici or aſtrologers in Rome, he ſays, that they were 'genus hominum potentibus infidum, ſperantibus fallax, quod in civitate noſtra et vetabitur ſemper, et retinebitur*:' Where every reader is ſurpriſed to find *vetabitur* and *retinebitur* joined together. Again, in giving a character of Galba the Emperor, he ſays, 'Major privato viſus, dum privatus fuit, et omnium conſenſu capax imperii, niſi im-

* Hiſtor. Lib. i. c. 22.

Digitized by Google

'perâſſet *.' Again, ſpeaking of a horrid thing that was done in the civil war between Otho and Vitellius, which every body deteſted and execrated, he ſays, 'Factum 'eſſe ſcelus loquuntur, faciuntque †.' Again, deſcribing Burrus, the Prefect of the Prætorian Cohorts under Nero, attending the Emperor while he was performing upon the ſtage, he ſays, that, among his other attendants, were 'cohors militum centurio-'nes tribunique et mœrens Burrus ac lau-'dans ‡.'

Theſe, and ſuch like turns, are, I know, commonly reckoned very fine and witty, and ſome of them, as I remember, are much praiſed by his tranſlator Mr. Gordon; but the noble ſimplicity of the true claſſical writing rejects all ſuch points and turns, which ſerve only to ſurpriſe the reader, and catch his admiration, not to inſtruct him. Nor do I know any mark by which the

* Hiſtor. Lib. i. c. 49.

† Ibid. Lib. iii. c. 25.

‡ Annal. xiv. c. 15.

Digitized by Google

genuine classics are more readily distinguished from the writers of later times and ages of less correct taste.

But, though I thus censure very freely the faults of Tacitus's style, I am very far from thinking contemptibly of his matter, or that he is not, upon the whole, a very valuable author. His subject, I think, is grand and noble. It is the history of the fall of a great people, greater than any that ever existed in arms and government, and in the extent and duration of their empire. Other nations may have been more glorious in their rise, or in their prosperity, but none was ever so great in its fall; and the period of Tacitus's history affords more extraordinary examples of virtues and vices, sometimes mixed in the same man, than are to be found any where else in the history of mankind. For the Romans were great in their vices, as well as their virtues, and in both almost exceeded humanity.

In treating this subject, Tacitus never falls below the dignity of it, at least, as to

Digitized by Google

the matter; nor is it, I think, without reason that he ſpeaks himſelf of the gravity of his work *. He ſhews himſelf every where a lover of virtue, and of virtuous men, and expreſſes, in the ſtrongeſt terms, his deteſtation of cruelty, and every kind of vice. He ſpeaks with admiration of philoſophy and its teachers, as often as he has occaſion to mention them, knowing that it was philoſophy that had produced thoſe extraordinary characters which he celebrates, ſuch as that of Thraſea Pætus, and Helvidius Priſcus †. Nor do I think the charge of malignity, commonly made againſt him, and of exaggerating too much the vices of men, is well founded: He has not made a Tiberius or a

* 'Ut conquirere fabuloſa, et fictis oblectare legentium animos, procul *gravitate* cœpti operis crediderim, ita vulgatis traditiſque demere fidem non auſim;' Hiſt. Lib. ii. c. 50.

† Speaking of this laſt, he ſays, 'Ingenium illuſtre altioribus ſtudiis juvenis admodum dedit; non, ut plerique, ut nomine magnifico ſegne otium velaret, ſed quo firmior adverſus fortuita rempublicam capeſſeret; doctores ſapientiæ ſecutus eſt, qui ſola bona quæ honeſta, mala tantum quæ turpia; potentiam, nobilitatem, cæteraque extra animum, neque malis, neque bonis annumerant;' Hiſt. Lib. iv. c. 5.

Digitized by Google

Nero ſo bad as Suetonius has made them; and he ſometimes rejects imputations of bad motives to actions that were commonly made at the time, even to the actions of Tiberius, the moſt cunning, as well as the moſt wicked of men: As, where he mentions the motives of Tiberius for not being preſent at the ſhews of the gladiators, but allowing his ſon Druſus to attend them: 'Edendis gladiatoribus, quos Germanici 'fratris ac ſuo nomine obtulerat, Druſus 'præſedit, quamquam vili ſanguine nimis 'gaudens: Quod vulgus formidoloſum, et 'pater arguiſſe dicebatur; cur abſtinuerit 'ſpectaculo ipſe variè trahebant; alii tædio 'cœtus, quidam triſtitia ingenii, et metu 'comparationis, quia Auguſtus comiter in-'terfuiſſet. Non crediderim ad oſtenden-'dam ſævitiam, movendaſque populi offen-'ſiones, conceſſam filio materiem; quam-'quam id quoque dictum eſt*.'

But, though he be not malignant, he is very ſagacious in divining the motives of men's actions, and the ſentiments of their heart; and, if the men are bad, it is natural

* Annal. Lib. i. c. 76.

Digitized by Google

to ſuppoſe that the motives and ſentiments of their heart are likewiſe bad. In ſpeaking of the diſadvantage he was under in writing the hiſtory of times ſo near his own, he ſays, 'Multorum qui Tiberio regente pœnam vel 'infamias ſubiere poſteri manent. Utque fa-'miliæ ipſæ jam extinctæ ſint, reperies, 'qui, ob ſimilitudinem morum, aliena male-'facta ſibi objectari putent. Etiam gloria ac 'virtus infenſos habet, ut nimis ex propin-'quo diverſa arguens *.' Again, he aſſigns various motives for Tiberius continuing the ſame men ſo long in the ſame governments: 'Id quoque morum Tiberii fuit, continuare 'imperia, ac pleroſque ad finem vitæ in 'iiſdem exercitibus, aut juriſdictionibus ha-'bere; cauſæ variæ traduntur: Alii *tædio no-'væ curæ ſemel placita pro æternis ſerva-'viſſe:* Quidam *invidia ne plures fruerentur;* 'ſunt qui exiſtiment, *ut callidum ejus inge-'nium, ita anxium judicium; neque enim 'eminentes virtutes ſectabatur, et rurſum 'vitia oderat: Ex optimis periculum ſibi 'a peſſimis dedecus publicum metuebat* †.'

* Annal. lib. iv. c. 33.

† Ibid. lib. i. c. 80.

Digitized by Google

Again, ſpeaking of the ſame Tiberius refuſing the title of *parens patriæ*, and of *dominus*, he ſays, 'Neque tamen ob ea *parentis* 'patriæ delatum et antea vocabulum aſ-'ſumpſit, acerbèque increpuit eos, qui *divinas* 'occupationes, ipſumque *dominum* dixerant; 'unde anguſta et lubrica oratio, ſub princi-'pe *qui libertatem metuebat, adulationem* 'oderat *.'

His political wiſdom has been much celebrated; and, no doubt, he was a prudent man, and had the experience of buſineſs. But I deny that he had gone far into the philoſophy, or even the hiſtory of government; otherwiſe, he never would have ſaid that a form of regimen mixt of the power of a king, or chief magiſtrate, nobles, and people, might be praiſed in theory, but could hardly ever exiſt in fact; or, if it did exiſt, could not be of long continuance †. An obſer-

* Annal. lib. ii. c. 87.

† Nam cunctas nationes et urbes, populus, aut primores, aut ſinguli, regunt: Delecta ex his et conſtituta reipublicæ forma laudari facilius quam evenire, vel, ſi evenit, haud diuturna eſſe poteſt. *Annal. lib.* iv. *c.* 33.

Digitized by Google

vation that has been applied by ſome Engliſh writers to the Britiſh conſtitution, with much exultation and triumph over the rudeneſs and ſimplicity of antient times, that could not deviſe a form of government ſo perfect as has been invented in this iſland, and which even ſo great an author as Tacitus ſpeaks of, as only a fine ſpeculation. But the fact truly is, that all the free ſtates of antiquity were governed in this way. Such was the government of Sparta, and likewiſe of Athens in antient times, and ſuch was even the original form of government in Rome, not only under their Kings, but under their conſuls; with this difference only, that, under their conſuls, they had two chief magiſtrates, in place of one that they had before. And Tacitus, if he had been deep in this part of philoſophy, would have known from theory, that there can be no government truly free which is not ſo mixed. But it is evident, that Tacitus himſelf had ſtudied philoſophy with that moderation which he commends in his father-in-law, Julius Agricola *; a clear proof of which, among

* 'Memoria teneo ſolitum ipſum [Agricolam] narrare, *ſe in prima juventa ſtudium philoſophiæ ac juris, ultra*

Digitized by Google

others, that might be quoted, is his doubting whether the gods, propitious or angry, had denied gold and silver to the Germans*. His model Sallust was, in this respect, a better philosopher; for he, speaking of avarice and money, says, 'Avaritia pecuniæ studium habet, quàm nemo sapiens concupivit; ea, quasi venenis malis imbuta, corpus animumque virilem effeminat: Semper infinita, insatiabilis, neque copia, neque inopia minuitur†.' And he might have known from history, that Lycurgus, the law-giver of Sparta, whose wisdom, according to the judgment of the oracle, exceeded human, laboured nothing more, in the form of polity that he gave to the Spartans, than to exclude wealth from

'*quàm concessum Romano ac senatori hausisse: Ni prudentia matris incensum ac flagrantem animum coërcuisset*; scilicet sublime et erectum ingenium, pulchritudinem ac speciem excelsæ magnæque gloriæ vehementius quàm cautè appetebat; mox mitigavit ratio et ætas; retinuitque, quod est difficillimum, ex sapientia modum;' Agricolæ vita, c. 4.

* 'Argentum et aurum propitii an irati dii negaverint, dubito;' De Morib. Germ. c. 5.

† Conj. Catilin. c. 11.

Digitized by Google

among them: And the ſame oracle, while yet their ſtate was flouriſhing, foretold, that nothing elſe but the love of money could ruin them*.

I think, however, as I have already ſaid, that Tacitus's hiſtory is, upon the whole, a valuable work; even the ſtyle, which is moſt exceptionable in it, is not the ſtyle of a little ſophiſt, ſuch as there were many in later times, who, unacquainted with human life and buſineſs, applied themſelves only to adorn words, and to tickle the ears, and pleaſe the fancy of their hearers and readers. Some of theſe orators, in the very age in which Tacitus lived, boaſted that their performances might be *ſung* or *danced* to†. The ſtyle which Tacitus has ſtudied is of a kind quite oppoſite; for it is of the auſtere kind, uncouth and harſh to exceſs. This I aſcribe chiefly to his being ſo unlucky in his choice of a model and pattern for compoſition; I mean Salluſt, whom he

* Ἀ φιλοχρηματια Σπαρτην ὁλει, ἀλλο δε ὑδεν.

† Dialog. de cauſis corruptæ eloquentiæ, cap. 26. Neque enim oratorius iſte.

Digitized by Google

commends, as 'Rerum Romanarum floren-
'tiſſimus auctor *.' For that, if he had cho-ſen a better model, he had genius enough to make better compoſition, I have no doubt; of which, I think, it is but fair, as I have quoted ſo much againſt him, to give one or two inſtances. Speaking of one Lepidus, a wiſe man of thoſe times, who kept well with Tiberius, and yet moderated and re-ſtrained his cruelty, which others flattered, he ſays, 'Hunc ego Lepidum, temporibus
'illis, gravem et ſapientem virum fuiſſe
'comperio. Nam pleraque ab ſævis adu-
'lationibus aliorum in melius flexit; neque
'tamen temperamenti egebat, cum æqua-
'bili auctoritate et gratia apud Tiberium
'viguerit. Unde dubitare cogor, fato et
'ſorte naſcendi, ut cætera, ita principum
'inclinatio in hos, offenſio in illos; an ſit
'aliquid in noſtris conſiliis, liceatque inter
'abruptam contumaciam, et deforme obſe-
'quium, pergere iter ambitione ac periculis
'vacuum †.' Not only the words here are very elegant, and well choſen, but the com-

* Annal. Lib. ii. c. 30.

† Ibid. Lib. iv. c. 20.

Digitized by Google

position is numerous and fine, especially in the latter part of the sentence. In his harangues he has, as I have already observed, more of composition than in his narrative; and there is the beginning of the Emperor Galba's speech to Piso, when he adopted him, which is as well composed as almost any thing that is to be found in any Latin author. It runs thus: 'Si te privatus, lege curiatâ apud Pontifices, ut moris 'est, adoptarem, et mihi egregium erat 'tunc, Pompeii et M. Crassi sobolem in penates meos adsciscere; et tibi insigne, Sulpiciæ ac Lutatiæ decora, nobilitati tuæ 'adjecisse. Nunc me deorum hominumque consensu ad imperium vocatum, præclara indoles tua, et amor patriæ impulit, 'ut principatum, de quo majores nostri armis certabant, bello adeptus, quiescenti offeram; exemplo Divi Augusti, qui sororis 'filium Marcellum, dein generum Agrippam, mox nepotes suos, postremo Tiberium 'Neronem privignum, in proximo sibi fastigio collocavit *.'

* Histor. Lib. i. c. 14.

Digitized by Google

Theſe, and other inſtances that might be quoted, ſhew that Tacitus was capable of writing much better than he has done. But his taſte was corrupted by the imitation of Salluſt, and the faſhion of the times, which, as he tells us, approved much of the ſtyle of Seneca: 'Fuit illi viro ingenium amœ-'num, et temporis ejus auribus accommo-'datum *.' It is not, however, the ſtyle of Seneca that Tacitus has imitated; for, though Seneca's ſentences be as ſhort, with generally more of point and turn in them, they are better ſmoothed and rounded, and are juſt what Petronius Arbiter, ſpeaking of the ſtyle of the declaimers of his time, calls 'melliti verborum globuli.'

And here I conclude my criticiſm upon Tacitus, which has drawn out to the greater length, that I have illuſtrated what I have ſaid of him by examples from him; becauſe I find that, in matters of criticiſm, general obſervations inſtruct little, unleſs they be explained by examples. I have been the fuller upon this author, ſo much celebrated

* Annal. Lib. xiii. c. 2.

Digitized by Google

in modern times, that, I believe, the imitation of his ſtyle has contributed very much to corrupt the preſent taſte of writing in Europe. To be convinced of this, we need only compare the Engliſh writers of the laſt century with thoſe of this, and particularly the Engliſh writers before, or about the time of the reſtoration, ſuch as Hooker, Milton, Lord Clarendon, Biſhop Wilkins, and Dr. Spratt, with the generality of the Britiſh writers of this century. At that time there were no other models for the writing art known, except the great and genuine claſſics, ſuch as Demoſthenes, Thucydides, Herodotus, Xenophon, Plato, among the Greeks, and Julius Cæſar, Cicero, and Livy, among the Latins; and, accordingly, we find in thoſe Engliſh authors I have named, a colour of ſtyle quite different from what is preſently the faſhion. In place of the ſhort, ſmart, unconnected ſentences, the *vibrantes ſententiolæ*, as Petronius calls them, of theſe later writers, we have periods in them, well compoſed, conſiſting of members connected, and aptly inſerted into one another, and full of ſenſe and argument, inſtead of point and turn,

Digitized by Google

and what is commonly called wit. The opinion of thoſe writers ſeems to have been, that their words ought to be connected as well as their ſenſe and meaning. And I have generally obſerved, that where a connection is wanting in the ſtyle, there is the ſame want in the ſenſe and argument. I muſt however acknowledge, that, as it is difficult to hit the exact middle in any thing, ſome of thoſe Engliſh authors above-mentioned have run out into ſo great a length of period, that all their ſkill in compoſition cannot ſometimes make the ſenſe ſufficiently clear, without looking farther back, and carrying on the attention longer than moſt readers are capable of doing.

But, whatever hurt the imitation of Tacitus may have done to a good taſte in writing, I think it is a piece of juſtice that I owe to the Britiſh authors to acknowledge, that the beſt imitation of him, far exceeding any thing that I have ſeen in French, is to be found in Mr. Mallet's life of Chancellor Bacon: Nor is it poſſible to refuſe a great deal of merit, in point of ſtyle, to that work, if

Digitized by Google

it be true that Tacitus is a model for ſtyle and compoſition. But I hope I have ſaid enough to ſhew, that he is not a proper model; and that, though his works be highly finiſhed, and have no doubt coſt him a great deal of pains and ſtudy, they are not finiſhed in a good taſte; and therefore the negligence, and even vulgarity, of ſuch a writer as Polybius, with all his *Megalopolitan* idioms, is preferable to the ſtudied obſcurity and affected ſententiouſneſs of Tacitus.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XIII.

The ſtyle of Tacitus has the general character of the ſtyle of the age.—The ſchools of declamation the cauſe of ſo general a corruption of taſte among the Romans coming on ſo faſt.—The beginning of thoſe ſchools at Rome, and the progreſs of them.—The bad effects of them upon the taſte of writing of all kinds.—Some ſpecimens of their ſtyle.—Seneca the philoſopher's ſtyle of the ſame kind.

THE ſtyle of Tacitus, though it have its peculiarities, has the general character of the ſtyle of the age in which he lived, as is evident from the writings of Seneca, who lived before Tacitus, and of Pliny the younger, who lived at the ſame time. This makes it a matter of ſome curioſity to inquire how the Romans, who at firſt copied only the beſt Greek maſters, and had formed, about the time of Cicero,

Digitized by Google

a good national taſte of ſpeaking and writing, ſhould, in ſo ſhort a time, have declined ſo much from that taſte. Many things, no doubt, in the degenerate times of any ſtate, contribute to the depravation of taſte in all the arts. Several of thoſe cauſes are enumerated in that elegant dialogue *de cauſis corruptæ eloquentiæ* *; but there is one which, I think, not only accounts for the Romans falling off from the true taſte of eloquence, but for their adopting that particular bad taſte which prevailed in the age of Tacitus; and it is the education of the youth in the ſchools of declamation, where they practiſed ſpeaking upon fictitious ſubjects, ſome of them altogether out of real life †; or, if not fictitious, rare and

* This dialogue is by ſome aſcribed to Tacitus, by others to Quinctilian; but, though it appear to have been written about the time in which they lived, it is of a character of ſtyle much ſuperior to that of either of them, and is by far the beſt written piece which remains of that age.

† Of this kind Petronius, in the beginning of his Satyricon, mentions ſome caſes. His words are, 'Et ideo 'ego adoleſcentulos exiſtimo in ſcholis ſtultiſſimos fieri, 'quia nihil ex iis, quæ in uſu habemus, aut audiunt aut

Digitized by Google

unuſual, and ſuch as were of no uſe in the common buſineſs of life *.

The practice began among the Greeks, not the Athenians, but the Aſiatic Greeks, from whom it came to Athens, and from Athens, it is likely, to Rome †. At what

'vident; ſed piratas cum catenis in litore ſtantes, ſed 'tyrannos edicta ſcribentes, quibus imperent filiis, ut pa-'trum ſuorum capita præcidant; ſed reſponſa in peſti-'lentia data, ut virgines tres aut plures immolentur.' Such ſubjects are what the author of the dialogue above-mentioned, *de Cauſis corruptæ Eloquentiæ*, calls 'fic-'tæ, nec ullo modo ad veritatem accedentes controver-'ſiæ, quæ linguam modo et vocem exercebant;' c. 31. And, if the reader deſires to ſee examples of ſuch queſtions, and their manner of treating them in thoſe ſchools, he will find them in Seneca the rhetorician's collection, which he calls *Controverſiæ*, of which I ſhall ſpeak more a little after.

* Of this laſt kind Suetonius, in the beginning of his book *de Claris Oratoribus*, has given us two examples.

† 'Nuper ventoſa iſthæc et enormis loquacitas A-'thenas ex Aſia commigravit, animoſque juvenum ad 'magna ſurgentes, velut peſtilente quodam ſidere adfla-'vit. Simulque corrupta eloquentiæ regula ſtetit et 'obmutuit;' Petron. Satyric. initio. This is that unphiloſophic eloquence of which the Halicarnaſſian complains very much; but obſerves, that it was beginning in

Digitized by Google

time it began among the Greeks is not certain: Quinctilian ſays, that it was about the time of Demetrius Phalereus; but one thing is certain, that it was not known in Athens in the days of Demoſthenes, Hyperides, and thoſe other great orators, ten of whom were produced in that ſingle city; and, in general, every kind of fine writing had come to perfection in Greece before any ſchool of declamation was opened *.

his time to yield to a better taſte and manner, under the patronage and protection of ſome of the great men of Rome; *Dionyſius de Antiquis Oratoribus, Commentarii, in initio.*

This Aſiatic eloquence, as Cicero informs us in his book *de Claris Oratoribus*, was of two kinds: 'Genera autem Aſiaticæ dictionis duo ſunt, unum ſententioſum, et argutum, ſententiis non tam gravibus et ſeveris, quàm concinnis et venuſtis. Aliud autem genus eſt non tam ſententiis frequentatum, quàm verbis volucrè atque incitatum.' Of the firſt kind was the eloquence of the ſchools of declamation, as is evident from the ſpecimens of it, which Seneca the rhetorician has preſerved to us, and of which I ſhall ſay more hereafter.

* 'Nondum juvenes declamationibus continebantur, cùm Sophocles aut Euripides invenerunt verba, quibus deberent loqui. Nondum umbraticus doctor ingenia deleverat, cum Pindarus novemque Lyrici Homerici, verſibus canere timuerunt. Et, ne poëtas quidem ad

Digitized by Google

In Rome, it did not begin till a little before the days of Cicero, who, when he was a boy, heard the firſt Latin declaimer, one L. Plotius Gallus*. At firſt, this kind of exerciſe was not at all approved of by the wiſer men of Rome; and it was prohibited by a decree of the ſenate, mentioned by Suetonius in his book *de Claris Rhetoribus*, and afterwards by an edict of the cenſors Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, and D. Licinius Craſſus the orator, who mentions this decree in Cicero's third book *de Oratore*, and calls the ſchools of thoſe declaimers *ludi impudentiæ*, the ſchools of impudence †.

' teſtimonium citem, certè neque Platona, neque Demoſ-
' thenem ad hoc genus orationis acceſſiſſe video;' Petronii Satyric.

* Sueton. de Clar. Rhetor. c. 2.

† From the words of this edict of the cenſors, which Suetonius has preſerved to us in the beginning of the book above quoted, it appears, that the word *rhetor* was not at that time naturalized in Rome; and, before Cicero's time, the word *declamatio* was not known, as Seneca the rhetorician informs us, in the preface to his firſt book of Controverſies.

Digitized by Google

Before this declamatory exercise was introduced into Rome, the author of the dialogue above-mentioned has informed us, how the young gentlemen of Rome were taught the art of speaking: They applied themselves, says he, to some famous orator of the time; him they followed—him they attended, as often as he had occasion to speak in any public or private cause, or in the assembly of the people. By this means, they heard not only him, but every other famous speaker, and grew acquainted with business and the courts of justice *. In this way they became very soon fit themselves for pleading causes; and, accordingly, our author tells us, that L. Crassus accused C. Carbo, when he was only nineteen years, Cæsar Dolabella, when he was one and twenty, and Asinius Pollio C. Cato, when he was two and twenty; and he adds, that their orations in those causes were, in his time, read with admiration †. And, in the same manner, the orators of Greece were bred by attending the courts of justice, and the assemblies of the people, hearing other orators, and then practising themselves, first

* Cap. 34. † Ibid.

Digitized by Google

in private cauſes, as Demoſthenes began by calling his tutors to account for their bad management, and, afterwards, when they came to the proper age, in the aſſemblies of the people.

Cicero was bred in the old way; and, from his earlieſt youth, attended the buſineſs of the forum, and ſtudied the manner of the different orators of his time, of whom he has given a very particular account in his book *de Claris Oratoribus*. But he likewiſe practiſed declamation very much, which was now become exceedingly faſhionable*: And it is to this practice that I aſcribe thoſe faults of his ſtyle, which I have ſo freely obſerved; for it was certainly from the ſchool of declamation that he got that tincture of the Aſiatic oratory, which was obſerved in him by his contemporaries †.

* He declaimed in Greek, ſays Suetonius, down to his prætorſhip, and in Latin after he was conſul, and an old man;—'Cicero ad prætoram uſque Græcè declamabat; Latinè vero ſenior quoque, et quidem cum conſulibus Hirtio et Panſa, quos diſcipulos et grandes prætextatos vocabat;' *de Claris Rhetoribus, Cap.* 1.

† See the dialogue above quoted, c. 18. and Quinctilian, who ſays that 'Ciceronem ſuorum temporum ho-

Digitized by Google

Yet it was chiefly with the Greek rhetoricians that he practiſed; for he tells us, that, when he inclined to put himſelf to ſchool to *L. Platius*, the firſt Latin rhetorician, as I have ſaid, in Rome, he was reſtrained by the authority of the moſt learned men then in Rome—'Qui exiſtimabant 'Græcis exercitationibus ali melius ingenia 'poſſe *.' And, in his book *de Claris Oratoribus*, he tells us, that he declaimed much in Latin, but in Greek more, both becauſe

'mines inceſſere audebant, ut tumidiorem et Aſianum 'et redundantem.' That it was the ſchool of declamation which had given him this taint appears, I think, from this, that it is only to be found in his orations; for, in his critical and philoſophical works, his ſtyle appears to me quite faultleſs, and abounding with great beauties. But, as to his ſtring of antitheſes, upon the ſubject of parricide, in the oration 'pro Boſcio Ameri-'no,' and his pretty little rounded ſentences, upon the ſubject of ſelf-defence, in the oration pro Milone, where not only ſingle words, but the members of the period, anſwer to one another, like ſo many tallies, I think it is impoſſible they could be the work of a man who had only practiſed in buſineſs and real life, but muſt have been produced by the mimic pleadings of the ſchool of declamation, where men ſpoke not to convince, but to be applauded and admired, like players.

* Dial. de Cauſ. Cor. Eloq. c. 3.

Digitized by Google

he improved his Latin ſtyle by the imitation of the Greek, which ſupplied ſo many more ornaments of ſpeech, and becauſe he could not be corrected and taught by the Greek maſters, unleſs he declaimed in Greek.

After his time, it appears that the practice of declamation in Greek was given over by the Roman youth; ſo that eloquence became intirely Latin, both in ſtudy and practice; and not only the Greek maſters were forgot, but even Cicero was not ſtudied; and Seneca the rhetorician mentions a declaimer whoſe ſcholars preferred him to Cicero *.

The bad effects of this upon the taſte of ſpeaking and writing were ſoon perceived

* Lib. 3. Declamat. in præfatione, 'Hi non tantum 'diſertiſſimis viris, quos paulo ante retuli, ſed etiam Ci-'ceroni Ceſtium ſuum præferrent, niſi lapides timerent. 'Quo tamen uno modo poſſunt, præferunt; hujus enim 'declamationes ediſcunt; illius orationes non legunt niſi 'eis quibus Ceſtius reſcripſit.' What a ſtrange depravation of taſte this muſt have been, to get by heart the declamations of a ſchoolmaſter, and not read Cicero!

Digitized by Google

by the men of ſenſe among the Romans, and are expreſſed in very ſtrong terms by ſome of them. Petronius Arbiter aſcribes the deſtruction of the Roman eloquence to thoſe maſters of this declamatory art; for, addreſſing himſelf to them, he ſays, 'Pace 'veſtrâ liceat dixiſſe, primi omnium elo-'quentiam perdidiſtis. Levibus enim at-'que inanibus ſonis ludibria quædam exci-'tando effeciſtis ut corpus orationis ener-'varetur et caderet *.' And, a little before that, after ridiculing the ridiculous pathos which they affected upon thoſe feigned ſubjects, calling out, 'Hæc vulnera pro liber-'tate publica excepi; hunc oculum pro vo-'bis impendi; date mihi ducem, qui me 'ducat ad liberos meos, nam ſucciſi poplites 'membra non ſuſtinent.' He adds, 'Hæc 'ipſa tolerabilia eſſent, ſi ad eloquentiam 'ituris viam facerent; nunc, et rerum tu-'more, et ſententiarum vaniſſimo ſtrepitu, 'hoc tantum proficiunt, ut, cùm in forum 'venerint, putent ſe in alium terrarum or-'bem delatos.' After that, he proceeds to tell us, that the ill taſte acquired in the

* Initio Satyrici.

Digitized by Google

ſchools of declamation had affected every kind of compoſition: 'Ne carmen quidem 'ſani coloris enituit; ſed omnia quaſi eodem 'cibo paſta non potuerunt uſque ad ſenec- 'tutem caneſcere.' This is undoubtedly true of the age of Tacitus, and of Seneca the philoſopher; and I ſay further, that it is true, in ſome degree, even of the preceeding, I mean the age of Auguſtus; for there is not any writer of that age that has intirely eſcaped this taint, or, as Petronius has expreſſed it, *the malign influence of this inauſpicious ſtar to good taſte*, Horace only excepted; for I do not except even the divine Virgil; and I appeal to his ſpeeches in the Æneid, which let any man of good taſte compare with thoſe of Homer, and he will perceive a difference of ſtyle, which, I think, cannot be otherwiſe accounted for, but from the general prevalence of the taſte of declamation, even in that age ſo general, that, as Petronius, who, I think, it is probable, either lived in the age of Auguſtus, or much nearer it than is commonly ſuppoſed, has told us, it infected not only the proſe, but the poetry. But Horace had ſtudied at Athens, Virgil at Naples; after writing

Digitized by Google

his Æneid, he did indeed intend to have paſſed the remainder of his life in Greece, and to have beſtowed three years there upon correcting that poem; but he was prevented by death. And, therefore, though I think he paſſed much too ſevere a ſentence upon it, when he ordered it, by his will, to be burnt; yet I have always conſidered it as an unfiniſhed poem, very far from being ſo perfect in its kind as either the Georgics or Paſtorals. It is, therefore, not to be wondered that Horace, ſo educated, following himſelf the advice he gave to the Piſones, and ſtudying, night and day, the great Greek maſters *, has kept free of the general infection, while Virgil has not eſcaped it. To be convinced of this, I deſire any man to read a ſpeech which he has put into the mouth of Juno, in one of his odes, and compare it with a ſpeech of Juno likewiſe, in the tenth book of the Æneid †. In the one we find a good deal of the *vibrantes ſenten-*

* ——— Vos exemplaria Græca
Nocturna verſate manu, verſate diurna.

† Horat. Ode iii. Lib. 3.—Æneid, Lib. x. v. 62. et ſeqq. The ſubjects of the two ſpeeches have a reſemblance, being both againſt the Trojans.

Digitized by Google

tiolæ, and ſmart pungent interrogations, ſuch as were much uſed in the ſchools of declamation; in the other, we have nothing but plain narrative and argument, in the fineſt poetical language. Even Petronius himſelf is not altogether free from the taint; for, as he ſays himſelf, 'Qui inter hæc nutri-'untur, non magis ſapere poſſunt, quàm 'bene olere qui in culina habitant.'

The author above quoted, of the dialogue upon the cauſes of the corruption of eloquence among the Romans, mentions the ſchools of declamation as one of the principal; and indeed he proves it clearly to have been ſo, by comparing that method of inſtitution with the antient way of ſtudying eloquence. The paſſage is much too long to be here tranſcribed, but it well deſerves to be read and ſtudied *.

But no body was better acquainted with the ſchools of declamation than Seneca the rhetorician; he had been himſelf a ſcholar in one of them, and had heard all the famous profeſſors of the art, from the begin-

* Cap. 28.—37.

Digitized by Google

ning of Auguſtus Cæſar's government, down, as we may ſuppoſe, (for he lived very long) to the end of Tiberius's, or the beginning of Caligula's reign; and he has preſerved to us a large collection of thoſe ſcholaſtic diſputations upon various ſubjects, which is valuable, if it were for no other reaſon than that it is the only monument extant of the eloquence of men famous in their time, ſuch as Portius Latro, Aurelius Tuſcus, Ceſtius Pius, and Gallio, great names in thoſe days, but which, if it had not been for the great induſtry, and ſingular memory of Seneca, would have been utterly loſt to poſterity.

The judgment of this author concerning the practice of declamation, with which he was ſo well acquainted, is the ſame with that of Petronius, and of the author of the dialogue I have ſo often quoted. He gives it firſt under the name of Montanus Votienus, a famous pleader of thoſe times, who, being aſked by Seneca why he did not practiſe declamation, gives ſeveral good reaſons for it: Among others, he ſays, 'That the declaimers ſpeak not to gain a

Digitized by Google

'cauſe, as pleaders do, but to pleaſe their 'hearers; therefore they let alone what is 'neceſſary or uſeful in the cauſe, and only 'ſtudy what is capable of flowers and or-'nament. Then they are not accuſtomed 'to anſwer arguments and objections made 'by adverſaries, but only ſuch as they make 'themſelves, and which are made to be an-'ſwered; moreover they are ſupported in 'this exerciſe by frequent applauſe, during 'the intervals of which they have time to 'pauſe, and aſſiſt their memory by recol-'lection. The faces likewiſe of all their 'hearers, at ſuch exhibitions, are familiar to 'them, and they are never diſagreeably in-'terrupted by laughing, or otherwiſe. For 'theſe reaſons, when they come into the 'forum to plead real cauſes, they ſeem 'tranſported into another world, where they 'are unable to bear the eyes of men they 'do not know, or the noiſe and tumult of a 'multitude; even the ſky above their heads 'frightens them.' And upon this occa-ſion he tells a ſtory of Portius Latro, one of the moſt famous profeſſors of this art, who, being employed to plead the cauſe of a friend of his, was ſo confounded with ap-

Digitized by Google

pearances so new to him, that he began his pleading with a solecism, and could not go on, till he persuaded the judge to change the place of the trial to the Basilica, or court of justice, where he had walls and a roof, to which he had always been accustomed. Montanus concludes with saying, that no exercise is useful that is not as like as possible to the business for which it is intended. And he mentions the case of gladiators, who are accustomed to exercise with heavier arms than those with which they fight *. He gives much the same opinion concerning the inutility of declamation in another place, under the name of Severus Cassius, a very famous orator of those times, who is not only highly praised by Seneca, but likewise by Quinctilian. Among other things, he says, that we can form no judgment of an orator by so childish an exercise: You might as well estimate the abi-

* 'Non est autem utilis exercitatio, nisi quæ operi simillima est illi, ad quod exercet. Itaque durior solet esse vero certamine. Gladiatores gravioribus armis discunt, quàm pugnant;' *Controvers. Lib.* iv. *initio.*

Digitized by Google

lities of a ſailor by his performance in a fiſh-pond *.

That the reader may be the better able to judge of this kind of eloquence, which was once ſo much in faſhion in Rome, and which was the chief cauſe of the corruption of their taſte of writing, I will give ſome ſpecimens of it from Seneca's collection, beginning with his *Suaſoriæ*, which is the name they gave to their declamations of the deliberative kind. The ſubject of the firſt *Suaſoria* is, Whether Alexander, after having over-run India, ſhould attempt to navigate the ocean in ſearch of other countries? To perſuade him not to do it, the declaimer accoſts him in this way: 'Magni pectoris 'eſt inter fecunda moderatio. Eundem for- 'tuna victoriæ tuæ, quem natura finem fa- 'cit.' Imperium tuum cludit oceanus. O 'quantum magnitudo tua, rerum quoque 'naturam ſupergreſſa eſt! Alexander orbi

* 'Non eſt quod oratorem in hac puerili exercitatione 'ſpectes. Quid ſi velis gubernatorem in piſcina æſti- 'mare?' *Epitom. Declam. Lib.* iii. *in præfatione.*

Digitized by Google

'magnus est. Alexandro orbis angustus est. 'Aliquis etiam magnitudini modus est. Non 'procedit ultra spatia sua cœlum. Maria 'intra terminos suos agitantur. Quicquid 'ad summum venit, incremento non reli- 'quit locum. Non magis quicquam ultra 'Alexandrum novimus, quàm ultra ocea- 'num.' Here we have the topic of moderation, and setting bounds to extravagant wishes, handled in pretty little acute sentences, well smoothed and rounded.

The subject of the second *Suasoria* is a deliberation, whether the three hundred Spartans, who, with other Greeks, were posted to guard the pass of Thermopylæ against Xerxes, should fly, after they were deserted by the rest of the Greeks. Here the declaimer, speaking of the difference between the Spartans and other Greeks, says, 'Aliud cæteros, aliud Laconas decet. 'Nos sine deliciis educamur, sine Musis vi- 'vimus, sine vita vincimus:' Where, besides the repetition and similarity of the composition, we have the contrast betwixt *vivimus* and *sine vita*, and the paradox of *overcoming without life*, which no doubt would

Digitized by Google

be highly applauded by the hearers. Of a like kind are the antitheſes of another declaimer upon the ſame ſubject, with a fine conceit at the end of them, which, from what Seneca ſays, appears to have been much commended. Speaking of Xerxes, he ſays, 'Terras armis obſidet, cœlum ſagittis, maria 'vinculis. Lacones, niſi ſuccurritis, mundus captus eſt.'

The ſubject of the fifth *Suaſoria* is, whether the Athenians ſhould not throw down the trophies which they had erected over the Perſians, Xerxes threatening that he would return, if they did not. Here one Silo Pompeius uſed an argument to perſuade the Athenians not to do it, which Seneca approves much of: 'Niſi tollitis, inquit, tro-'phæa, ego veniam. Hoc ait Xerxes, niſi 'hæc trophæa tollitis, alia ponetis.' And, I think, it muſt be allowed, that not only the argument is good in itſelf, but that the turn given to it is ſmart and ſurpriſing. But Seneca mentions an argument uſed upon the other ſide by another declaimer, viz. Gallio, which he commends ſtill more. Speaking of the Perſians, he ſays, 'Primus

'illi perire poſſunt, quàm nos vincere.' Upon which Seneca's obſervation is, 'Hoc 'loco diſertiſſimam ſententiam dixit, quæ 'vel in oratione, vel in hiſtoria ponitur.' And no doubt the argument was very concluſive, and the turn given to it not ſo far fetched, or ſophiſtical, but that it might be tolerated, even in hiſtory, or a ſerious oration.

The ſubject of the ſixth *Suaſoria* is, whether Cicero ſhould beg his life of Antony. Ceſtius Pius, one of thoſe famous declaimers above-mentioned, adviſes him not to do it, in a ſtyle not unlike Cicero's own; 'Si ad deſiderium populi reſpices, Cicero, 'quandoque perieris, parum vixiſti; ſi ad 'res geſtas, ſatis vixiſti; ſi ad injurias for'tunæ et præſentem reipublicæ ſtatum, 'nimium diu vixiſti; ſi ad memoriam ope'rum tuorum, ſemper victurus es.' Varius Geminus, another declaimer, took the other ſide in this deliberation, and adviſed Cicero not to die, but to fly to M. Brutus, C. Caſſius, or Sextus Pompeius: 'Et adje'cit,' ſays Seneca, 'illam ſententiam, quàm 'Caſſius Severus unicè mirabatur. Quid

Digitized by Google

'deficiemus? Et reſpublica ſuos triumviros 'habet. Deinde etiam quas petere poſſet 'regiones, percurrit: Siciliam dixit vindi-'catam eſſe ab illo, Ciliciam a proconſule 'egregiè adminiſtratam, familiares ſtudiis 'ejus et Achaiam et Aſiam, Deiotari regnum 'obligatum beneficiis, Ægyptum et habere 'beneficii memoriam, et agere perfidiæ 'pœnitentiam, ſed maxime illum in Aſiam 'et Macedoniam hortatus eſt in Caſſii et 'Bruti caſtra.' Caſſius Severus's reflection (the ſame whom I mentioned before, as not approving of the practice of declamation) is, I think, very ſenſible: 'Alios 'declamâſſe aiebat, Varium Geminum vi-'vum conſilium dediſſe:' By which he means, that this declaimer had given a counſel which he might have given to Cicero, if he had been alive; and that his arguments were ſuch as might have been uſed in real life and buſineſs.

The next *Suaſoria* concerns Cicero likewiſe; for it deliberates, whether Cicero ſhould burn his writings at the deſire of Antony, upon promiſe of having his life ſpared. Ceſtius Pius adviſes him not to do

Digitized by Google

it: 'Asserte te potius libertati, et unum 'crimen inimico adjice, fac Antonium mo- 'riendo nocentiorem.' The argument, to be sure, is not obvious, and yet not unnatural, if we could suppose Cicero a man of determined resolution, and who loved life less than he hated Antonius. There were other good things said upon this side, such as, 'Si scripta combusseris, Antonius pau- 'cos annos tibi promittit; at si non com- 'busseris, populus Romanus omnes.' Again, 'Quamdiu reipublicæ nostræ aut 'fortuna steterit, aut memoria duraverit, 'admirabile posteris vigebit ingenium, et, 'uno proscriptus sæculo, proscribes Anto- 'nium omnibus:' Where there is more of a flowing composition than is usual in those declamations.

The declamations of the judicial kind, or *controversiæ*, as they are called, are pretty much in the same style. I will, however, give some specimens likewise from them. The subject of these controversies is generally the application of some law to a case not provided for by that law. The first

Digitized by Google

caſe I ſhall mention is ſingular enough. The law was, that if a man raviſhed an unmarried woman, ſhe ſhould have the option whether ſhe would marry him, or he be put to death. A man raviſhed two women in the ſame night—the one deſired his death, the other that he ſhould marry her. Many ingenious arguments are uſed upon both ſides: I ſhall only take notice of one that was uſed againſt the raviſher: 'Perieras, 'raptor, ni bis perire meruiſſes *.'

Another of theſe declaimers of controverſy, having occaſion to mention the ſudden deaths that were the effects of luxury and intemperance, gave this turn to the thought and compoſition: 'Quicquid avium volitat, 'quicquid piſcium natat, quicquid ferarum 'diſcurrit, noſtris ſepelitur ventribus. Quæ-'re nunc cur ſubito moriamur? Mortibus 'vivimus.' Seneca is, with good reaſon, much diſpleaſed with this extravagant conceit—'Non ſum,' ſays he, 'ex judicibus ſe-'veriſſimis, qui omnia ad exactam regu-'lam redigam; multa donanda ingeniis pu-

* Lib. i. Controverſ. 5.

Digitized by Google

'to; ſed donanda vitia, non portenta, 'ſunt *.'

The laſt caſe I ſhall mention is very ſingular. A man was ſhipwrecked, loſt his wife and three children, and had his houſe burnt down: Upon this he hangs himſelf up. One, paſſing by accidentally, cuts him down; he is ſued for damages by the perſon whoſe life he had ſaved. This was an excellent ſubject for ſuch mock-trials; and, accordingly, it is very ingeniouſly argued upon both ſides. On the ſide of the defendant, the topic of the mutability of men's fortunes affords many pretty little ſentences: 'Mutantur vices felicitatis humanæ, 'proſcriptus aliquando proſcripſit; victi fu'giunt, proſcripti latent, natant naufragi. 'Amiſi, inquit, uxorem, liberos, patrimo'nium. Tu putabas ea te conditione ac'cepiſſe, ne perderes? Ludit de ſuis fortu'na muneribus, et, quæ dedit, aufert; et, 'quæ abſtulit, reddit; nec unquam tutius 'eſt illam experiri, quàm cum locum inju-

* Præfat. ad Lib. v. Controverſ.

Digitized by Google

'riæ non habet.' On the other ſide, the plaintiff ſays, 'Injuria eſt, ut, qui meo ar-'bitrio debui, tuo moriar. Amiſi uxorem, 'liberos, patrimonium. Fortuna mihi ni-'hil præter laqueum reliquit; iſte nec la-'queum. Sumpſi inſtrumenta mortis, ſoli-'tudinem et laqueum; alterum aptum mo-'rituro, alterum miſero. Quiſquis inter-'veneris, ſi amicus es, deſle; ſi inimicus 'ſpecta. Cùm a me iſte accuſetur, gravio-'rem de me quàm de reo ferte ſententiam. 'Ego, ut moriar, iſte, ut ne prohibeat. Ne 'hæc narrarem, mori volui; præcidit re-'medium meum; ſi qua fides eſt, non ena-'tavi, ſed ejectus ſum. Nihil jam timebam, 'niſi vivere. Domus meæ fata claudo, 'nullo miſerior, quàm quod ultimus mo-'rior.' The laſt thought I think very good; and it is finely paraphraſed by Mr. Thomſon, in his verſes upon the death of Mr. Aikman:

> Unhappy he! who lateſt feels the blow,
> Whoſe eyes have wept o'er every friend laid low.

From theſe examples, it is eaſy to ſee the nature of this kind of eloquence. The matter of it is arguments from general to-

Digitized by Google

pics, very artificially, and ſometimes very ingeniouſly, handled. The ſtyle of it is cut into ſhort ſentences, very acute, and of wonderful brevity, adorned with thoſe oſtentatious figures, which both pleaſe the fancy and ſooth the ear, of antitheſis and ſimilarity of compoſition, like anſwering to like, and oppoſite to oppoſite. Tacitus's ſtyle reſembles it, in as far as it is ſhort and disjointed, but differs from it, in as far as it has not ſo many of thoſe ambitious ornaments; and the ſentences are not ſo well rounded and pared, but more harſh and abrupt. But the ſtyle of Seneca the philoſopher is, in every reſpect, ſo like that of the ſchool of declamation, in which no doubt he had practiſed much, that, I think, it is impoſſible to diſtinguiſh the one from the other. To be convinced of this, we need only compare what is ſaid in the laſt controverſy I mentioned, upon the mutability of fortune, with what Seneca has ſaid upon the ſame topic, in more than one place, and we ſhall find, not only the ſame thoughts, but almoſt the ſame words, with the ſame compoſition.

Digitized by Google

Quinctilian's judgment of the ſtyle of this philoſopher is ſo juſt, and ſo candid, that the reader will not be diſpleaſed to have it here in his own words:—'Ex induſtria 'Senecam in omnia genere eloquentiæ ver- 'ſatum diſtuli propter vulgatam falſo de me 'opinionem, quia damnare eum, et invi- 'ſum quoque habere, ſum creditus; quod 'accidit mihi dum corruptum et omnibus 'vitiis fractum dicendi genus revocare ad 'ſeveriora judicia contendo; tum autem 'ſolus ferè hic in manibus adoleſcentum 'fuit, quem non equidem omnino conabar 'excutere, ſed potioribus præferri non ſine- 'bam, quos ille non deſtiterat inceſſere, 'cum diverſi ſibi conſcius generis, placere 'ſe in dicendo poſſe iis, quibus illi place- 'rent, diffideret. Amabant autem eum ma- 'gis quàm imitabantur, tantumque ab eo 'defluebant, quantum ille ab antiquis de- 'ſcenderat; foret enim optandum, pares ac 'ſaltem proximos illi viro fieri. Sed placebat 'propter ſola vitia, et ad ea ſe quiſque diri- 'gebat effingenda, quæ poterat. Deinde 'cùm ſe jactaret eodem modo dicere, Sene- 'cam infamat, cujus et multæ alioquin et 'magnæ virtutes fuerunt; ingenium facile et

Digitized by Google

'copiosum, plurimum studii, multa rerum
'cognitio, in qua tamen aliquando ab iis,
'quibus inquirenda quædam mandabat, de-
'ceptus est. Tractavit etiam omnem ferè
'studiorum materiam. Nam et orationes
'ejus, et poëmata, et epistolæ, et dialogi
'feruntur. In philosophia parum diligens,
'egregius tamen vitiorum insectator fuit;
'multæ in eo claræque sententiæ, multa
'etiam morum gratia legenda: Sed in elo-
'quendo corrupta pleraque, atque eo perni-
'ciosissima, quod abundant dulcibus vitiis.
'Velles eum suo ingenio dixisse alieno ju-
'dicio. Nam, si aliqua contempsisset, si pa-
'rum concupisset, si non omnia sua amâsset,
'si rerum pondera minutissimis sententiis
'non fregisset, consensu potius eruditorum,
'quàm puerorum amore comprobaretur.
'Verùm sic quoque jam robustis, et seve-
'riore genere satis firmatis, legendus, vel
'ideo, quod exercere potest utrumque judi-
'cium. Multa enim, ut dixi, probanda in
'eo, multa etiam admiranda sunt, eligere
'modo curæ sit: Quod utinam ipse fecis-
'set. Digna enim fuit illa natura quæ me-
'liora vellet; quod voluit effecit *.'

* Lib. x. c. 1.

Digitized by Google

What Quinctilian here ſays of the danger there is in thoſe reading him, whoſe judgment is not confined by ſevere ſtudy, and the imitation of better authors, is certainly true; for they will imitate thoſe *dulcia vitia*, and, as is always the caſe, multiply them, or make them worſe; ſo that they will write a ſtyle of wit altogether, which is, perhaps, the worſt of all ſtyles, being the fartheſt removed from a ſtyle of ſenſe and gravity.

I obſerve, that the witty writers among us, if they ſtudy at the ſame time to give a roundneſs and ſmoothneſs to their ſentences (for I cannot call them periods), imitate Seneca more than Tacitus; whereas thoſe who affect ſentences of great gravity and wiſdom, make Tacitus their model; but I would adviſe them both to ſtudy diligently thoſe remains of the ſchools of declamation, where, I will venture to ſay, that they will find as many *fine things*, as they are commonly called, as are to be found in any one book. But, on the other hand, if a man would form a grave, manly ſtyle, of that noble ſimplicity, in which the perfection of

Digitized by Google

all the arts consists, a style of business fit to convince and instruct, or to move and inflame, if that be required; not a style of pomp and ostentation, proper only to be admired by the untaught multitude; let him study the great masters of more antient times; and when he has, by such study, confirmed his taste and judgment, then he may come without danger to the reading of Tacitus, Seneca, Portius Latro, and the other declaimers, from whom he may gather not only many flowers of speech, but many useful things.

Thus I have endeavoured to explain the nature of the eloquence of those schools; and it appears, that it answers exactly to the description of one kind of the Asiatic eloquence given us by Cicero, in the passage above quoted. Accordingly, I have shewn that it came from Asia; and it was very natural that such an eloquence should be produced in a country where it was of little use, except for show and ostentation. There, instead of sound sense and argument, and distinct narrative of facts, speaking would become wit-

Digitized by Google

ty and clever; and as wit cannot bear to be diffuſed into long periods, the compoſition would naturally be broken into ſhort ſmart ſentences, turned and rounded in a manner agreeable to the ear; and this, as we ſhall ſhew afterwards, is the nature of *wit*.

There have not been, in modern times, any ſchools of declamation that I have heard of, whatever practice there may have been of it in private clubs or ſocieties. But there is what the French call the *declamation of the theatre*, that has been much practiſed among people of faſhion, both in France and England. This may be a very good amuſement; but, if it is uſed as an exerciſe preparatory to public ſpeaking, I take upon me abſolutely to condemn it, as a practice ſtill more uſeleſs for that purpoſe than the practice of the ſchools I have been cenſuring. For there the genius was exerciſed in the invention of arguments, and the expreſſion, as well as the thought, was the declaimer's own. But here the practitioner ſubmits to the mean taſk of repeating another man's thoughts and words, in doing which he commonly mimics ſome player that is in

Digitized by Google

faſhion, and very often tries to expreſs, by voice and geſture, a paſſion that he does not feel. This manner, transferred to buſineſs and real life, will diſpleaſe a man of ſenſe and good taſte, more than the rudeſt ſimplicity, and greateſt want of art in ſpeaking. And ſuch an orator loſes one of the chief means of perſuaſion, namely, the character of the ſpeaker: For, if he will aſſume the manner of a player, he muſt be contented to paſs for a player, not a man of worth and gravity, not the patriot or lover of his country, that he holds out to us.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XIV.

Of the other kind of ornamented ſtyle, the gay and florid.—Antient authors, who have written in that ſtyle.—Modern, ſuch as my Lord Shaftſbury.—Character of this ſtyle.

THE other kind of highly ornamented ſtyle I call the gay or florid, of which the ornaments are quite different from thoſe of Thucydides's ſtyle; for they are of the harſh and auſtere kind: Whereas the ornaments of this ſtyle are all of the ſweet and pleaſurable ſort, amuſing the imagination with fine images, and tickling the ear with the moſt agreeable ſounds. Of this kind may be reckoned the poetry of Sappho and Anacreon; the epidictic orations too among the Greeks, ſuch as Gorgias and Hippias, and other antient ſophiſts, uſed to ſpeak at the games, and other panegyrical

Digitized by Google

aſſemblies in Greece, were in this ſtyle; and likewiſe the orations of the later ſophiſts, ſuch as Libanius and Themiſtius, contemporaries of Julian the Emperor. Of this kind alſo is a great part of the works of Lucian, particularly one of his dialogues, entitled *Amores*, wh.. we have two orations, one in praiſe of the love of women, another an invective upon women, and extolling the love of boys, in the moſt florid ſtyle of rhetoric that is, I think, any where to be found. And of the ſame kind were certain ſuppoſititious works, forged by ſome of thoſe later ſophiſts, and imputed to antient authors, ſuch as the poem upon the ſtory of Hero and Leander, ſaid to be the work of Muſæus.

The poetry of this age is almoſt all of this kind, and a great deal of our proſe; not only what is profeſſedly poetical, and is very properly ſaid, by Mr. Pope, not to be poetry, but *proſe run mad*, but every thing that is intended for a very fine compoſition. One of the moſt remarkable of this ſort, that has been publiſhed of late years, is Hervey's Meditations: But the beſt by far of the

Digitized by Google

kind are, the characteriſtics of my Lord Shaftſbury, particularly the laſt volume of them, which is almoſt wholly in this ſtyle *.

The diſtinguiſhing marks of it are, a great copiouſneſs of words, and theſe the

* This noble author, as I have elſewhere obſerved, has the richeſt and moſt copious ſtyle of any writer in Engliſh; but as in this he has imitated Plato, ſo, I think, he has fallen under the cenſure which the Halicarnaſſian pronounces upon Plato, of being oſtentatiouſly rich in words, and abounding too much in periphraſes, and different ways of expreſſing the ſame thing—ἐκχειται εἰς ἀπειροκαλες περιφρασεις, πλειστον ὀνοματων ἐπι δεικνυμενη (leg. ἐπιδεικνυμενος) κινδυνος; *Epiſt. ad Cn. Pomp. c. 2.* He is too, as the Halicarnaſſian ſays of Plato, ib. over-abundant in epithets, which he has uſed with a poetical licence. He often concludes his periods with two nouns, and each its attendant epithet, which gives a kind of dancing cadence to his periods, to which one may beat time; ſuch as, 'a man of profound craft, and 'notable dexterity;' ib. p. 112.—'divinely authoriſed 'inſtructor, and ſpiritual chief;' p. 114. Sometimes he has three of this kind all in a ſtring: 'A ſacred hor-'ror, religious antipathy, and mutual diſcord, among 'worſhippers;' ib. p. 60. But, with all theſe faults, I think it muſt be admitted, that his ſtyle is correct as to the grammatical part, and very elegant; and, if his faults of ſtyle were greater than they are, I ſhould forgive them all, in favour of his high taſte of antient literature and the fine arts, and a certain liberal air and gentleman-like manner, which runs through all his

Digitized by Google

moſt pompous and high ſounding that can be found; a great many metaphors and other tropes; abundance of epithets, antitheſes, ſimiles, and poetical deſcriptions; paronomaſias, pariſoſes, and ſuch like figures, as make the language go ſmoothly off the tongue.

And ſo much for both kinds of the highly ornamented ſtyle, the ſevere, and the gay or florid.

writings, and is, I think, a peculiar and diſtinguiſhing mark of his ſtyle.

But his matter does not pleaſe me ſo much as his ſtyle; becauſe I approve of nothing written againſt the eſtabliſhed religion of the country, whether in the way of ſerious argument, or of ridicule. The raillery, it is true, of my Lord Shaftſbury is very delicate; and he has treated the Chriſtian religion, and its profeſſors, with decency, at leaſt, and good breeding, which is more than can be ſaid of ſome later infidel writers, one of whom has told us, in ſo many words, that, before a man can believe the Bible hiſtory, the whole principles of his underſtanding muſt be ſubverted. But my Lord Shaftſbury was a high-bred man of faſhion, who had improved a natural good taſte, not only by the ſtudy of the *politeneſs of antient dialogue*, to uſe his own expreſſion, but by keeping the beſt company in the age in which he lived—a thing which I hold to be no leſs neceſſary to make a polite writer, than a well-bred gentleman,

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XV.

Of the middle ſtyle.—Examples of that ſtyle, antient and modern.

THE third and laſt character of ſtyle I mentioned is the middle or temperate kind, partaking of both, but ſhunning the extremes of either; for it is not ſo ſimple as the one, nor ſo much ornamented as the other. Of this kind, according to the Halicarnaſſian, is the ſtyle of Iſocrates the orator, and of Plato the philoſopher, but both bordering on the exceſs of gay and florid; nor was this ſtyle perfected, ſays he, till the time of Demoſthenes *. He, in ſome of his orations, as we have ſeen, and where the nature of his ſubject required it, is as perfectly ſimple as Lyſias; but, in his public orations, the ſtyle is admirably tempered by the ſimplicity of Lyſias, the auſterity of Thucydides,

* Περὶ τῆς δεινότητος τῦ Δημοσθένους; cap. 14. 15. 16.

Digitized by Google

and the ſweet and pleaſurable ſtyle of Iſocrates and Plato. This the Halicarnaſſian, in the paſſage above quoted, has proved by examples from all the three authors.

The Halicarnaſſian's own ſtyle is of this kind, plain and didactic, but with as much ornament as art or ſcience admits. And of the ſame kind are the rhetorical works of Cicero, particularly his three books *de Oratore*, the moſt finiſhed of his works of that kind, in which he has very ſucceſsfully imitated the dialogue of Plato.

The beſt writers in Engliſh compoſe in this ſtyle; ſuch as Milton, Lord Clarendon, Lord Bolingbroke, Dr. Atterbury; and, to come down to our own times, Dr. Armſtrong and Mr. Harris, who has, like Plato and Cicero, adorned philoſophy with the lights and graces of eloquence; and, like the Halicarnaſſian, has ſhewn that grammar and criticiſm are ſuſceptible of the ornaments of words.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XVI.

Of a fourth general character of ſtyle, the ſublime.—It conſiſts chiefly of the matter—Examples of it.—The counter part of the ſublime, or mock-heroic.—Examples of this ſtyle, antient and modern.—Improper uſe of it by Mr. Fielding, in his hiſtory of Tom Jones.—Of a ſixth general character of ſtyle, the ridiculous.—The meaning of the word.—The nature of the thing.—The reaſon of the pleaſure it gives us.—General obſervations upon it.—Vanity and affectation the proper ſubjects of it.—Examples of a proper and an improper ridiculous character.—Authors antient and modern that have excelled in the ridiculous.—It does not belong to the greateſt geniuſes.

I Have, in the preceeding chapter, ſpoken of three general characters of ſtyle; I am now to treat of a fourth, which I call the *ſublime*; it may alſo be called the *high*

Digitized by Google

ſtyle; but we muſt diſtinguiſh it from what I call the *highly ornamented ſtyle*, from which, I think it is very different. For it is the matter chiefly that conſtitutes the ſublime; and, if it be not of a nature high and exalted, whatever ornaments of diction we may beſtow upon it, we ſhall never attain to this character of ſtyle.

What then is the matter or ſubject of the ſublime? I anſwer, it is God and nature; the works of God and nature; wiſdom, virtue, heroic characters of men and their actions; and, in ſhort, whatever we conceive to be higheſt and moſt exalted, whether in nature or in art.

But is the matter alone ſufficient to conſtitute the ſublime? If it were ſo, then the Phyſics and Metaphyſics of Ariſtotle, or whatever elſe is well written upon ſubjects of high ſpeculation, muſt be reckoned ſublime. Something more then, in my apprehenſion, is required to entitle any compoſition to that name: And what is that? It is, that the writer ſhould have ſentiments

Digitized by Google

ſuitable to the ſubject, and that he ſhould expreſs thoſe ſentiments. And what are thoſe ſentiments? I anſwer, ſentiments of high admiration, ſuch as ſubjects of the kind we are ſpeaking of ought to inſpire, and will inſpire, into every man of genius. If, therefore, a philoſopher only teaches and explains any high theorem (and that is all that belongs to him as a philoſopher), but expreſſes no emotion, nor any thing like rapturous or enthuſiaſtic admiration, he is not a ſublime writer, though he may have very great merit as a philoſopher, and may raiſe ſuch ideas in others, and perhaps feel them himſelf, though he do not expreſs them; which, I believe, was the caſe of Ariſtotle, and was certainly the caſe of Plato.

But is there no ornament of words, no particular kind of ſtyle, required to expreſs the ſublime? I think not; only the words muſt not be low, nor the compoſition mean and abject; for theſe would debaſe the nobleſt thoughts. But, I think, no ornament is required; or, if any is given, it ought to be rather of the ſevere kind, than of the

Digitized by Google

florid and pleaſurable. For ſuch figures as the pariſoſis, paronomaſia, and like endings, would be much worſe than no ornament.

Let us ſee how this notion of the ſublime will apply to ſome famous paſſages that have been quoted as inſtances of the ſublime; and I will begin with the words of Moſes, giving an account of the creation of the world by Almighty God, a ſubject, no doubt, in its nature moſt ſublime: 'And 'God ſaid, Let there be light, and there was 'light.' The thing to be expreſſed here is, the act of Omnipotence creating, at once, and by a ſimple *fiat*, the fineſt and moſt ſubtile of all material things:

Etherial, firſt of things, quinteſſence pure.
Par. Loſt. B. vii. v. 244.

Such an act, ſo far exceeding all human comprehenſion, was not eaſy to be properly expreſſed; for, as the ſame author ſays,

Immediate are the acts of God, more ſwift
Than time or motion; but to human ears,
Cannot without proceſs of ſpeech be told;
So told, as earthly notion can receive.
Book vii. v. 176.

Digitized by Google

To endeavour to adorn with words ſuch a thought, would be to degrade it. Moſes, therefore, has expreſſed it in the ſimpleſt, and, at the ſame time, the nobleſt manner, by which he has told us, as well as could be told by *proceſs of ſpeech*, that the thing was immediately done by the word of the Almighty. And, though the words be as ſimple as poſſible, yet it may be obſerved, that there is a beauty and an emphaſis in the repetition of the word *light*; for the thought would not have been ſo well expreſſed, if it had ſtood thus: 'God ſaid, Let there 'be light, and it was ſo.' Accordingly Milton, in tranſlating the paſſage into verſe, has not neglected this beauty:

> Let there be *light*, ſaid God, and forthwith *light*
> Etherial, firſt of things, quinteſſence pure,
> Sprung from the deep. B. vii. v. 243.

And as it is thus properly expreſſed by Moſes, it could not, I think, have been ſo expreſſed but by a man who had a juſt conception of ſo great an act of power*.

* This is the opinion of Longinus, who quotes this paſſage as an inſtance of the ſublime, and make Moſes's conception of the power of God the foundation of the

Digitized by Google

Another instance of the sublime, quoted also by Longinus, is the prayer of Ajax in the Iliad, upon occasion of a thick darkness which covered the Grecian army, in the midst of a hot engagement. He prays to Jupiter to deliver them from the darkness; and then, says he, destroy us in the light, since that is your will. The words here are all common, ordinary words, and nowise figured in the composition *; but the sentiment is noble, and truly heroic, and that makes the sublime of the passage; for he

sublime of the passage. He had before quoted a passage from Homer, which, he says, is sublime, because the poet there expresses an idea of Neptune worthy of the god. In like manner, says he, the law-giver of the Jews, not a common man, having conceived such a notion of the power of God, expresses it thus: Longinus's words are—ταυτη και ὁ τῶν Ιουδαιων δισμοθετης, οὐχ ὁ τυχων ανηρ, επισιδη τὴν τῦ θειυ δυναμιν κατα τὴν ἀξιαν ἐχωρησε, καξιφησεν· ἐυθυς ἐν τῇ εισοδῳ γραψας τῶν νόμων,—εἰπεν ὁ θεος, φησι, τί; γένεσθω φως, καὶ ἐγενετο. γενεσθω γῆ, καὶ ἐγενετο. De subl. 9.

* Ζεῦ πατερ, ἀλλα συ ῥυσαι ὑπ' ἠερος υἷας, Ἀχαιων·
Ποιησον δ' αἰθρην, δος δ' ὀφθαλμοισιν ἰδεσθαι
Ἐν δὲ φαει καὶ ὀλεσσον, ἐπει νυ τοι ἐυαδεν ὥτως;
Il. ε. v. 645.

Digitized by Google

does not pray to live, but to have an opportunity of dying bravely in the light. And we may obſerve, in paſſing, that there is a bluntneſs in deſiring Jupiter to deſtroy them, which ſuits very well the character of Ajax; but could hardly, with propriety, have been put into the mouth of any other of the heroes.

Longinus quotes ſeveral other paſſages from Homer as examples of the ſublime, particularly his deſcription of the battle of the gods, in the 22d Iliad, and the convulſion of nature upon that occaſion. For theſe I refer to Longinus himſelf; and I will only add, that, when they are examined, it will be found, that the ſublime of them all conſiſts chiefly in the thought: I ſay *chiefly*; for I would not be underſtood to deny that there is a language ſuitable to great thoughts, and that there ſhould be a certain dignity both in the words and the compoſition. But over-doing in ſuch caſes is very dangerous; and it is much better that the language ſhould be too little, than too much ornamented.

Digitized by Google

But what ſhews evidently that the matter is principal in the ſublime character of ſtyle is this, that, if the matter be low and trivial, and, at the ſame time, the ſentiments heroic with language ſuitable, then it becomes a ſpecies of writing altogether different, and indeed oppoſite, and which, accordingly, bears the name of *mock-heroic*, or *burleſque*. Of this kind we have an antient poem, by ſome given to Homer, but, probably, the work of a ſophiſt of later times; I mean the battle of the frogs and mice, in which we have aſcribed to thoſe little contemptible animals the ſentiments and actions of the heroes of the Iliad and Odyſſey; and the ridicule of the pompous language of tragedy, by making it too pompous, or what we call bombaſt, was frequent among the poets of the old comedy at Athens.

In modern times, there are many works of this kind, both in proſe and verſe; but the beſt of them all, in my judgment, is the Dunciad of Mr. Pope, in which, to the ridicule of the mock-heroic, is joined the keeneſt ſatire. And though, I believe, moſt

Digitized by Google

ſcholars who underſtand the original are of opinion, that he has not tranſlated Homer well; yet every body, I imagine, will admit that, in the Dunciad, he has parodied Virgil exceedingly well; but of this I have ſaid enough elſewhere*.

Mr. Fielding, in his comic narrative poem, the hiſtory of Tom Jones, has mixed with his narrative a good deal of the mock-heroic; and, particularly, there is a deſcription of a ſquabble in a country church-yard wholly in that ſtyle †. It is, indeed, an excellent parody of Homer's battles, and is highly ridiculous; but, in my opinion, it is not proper for ſuch a work: *Firſt*, becauſe it is too great a change of ſtyle, greater than any work of a legitimate kind, which I think Fielding's is, will admit, from the ſimple and familiar to the heroic or mock-heroic. It is no better than a patch; and, though it be a ſhining one, no regular work ought to have any at all. For Horace has very properly given it as a mark of a work irregular, and of ill texture, the having ſuch purple clouts, as he calls them;

* P. 110. † Book iv. c. 8.

Digitized by Google

—— Late qui ſplendeat unus et alter
Aſſuiter pannus.—— ARS POET.

Secondly, becauſe it deſtroys the probability of the narrative, which ought to be carefully ſtudied in all works, that, like Mr. Fielding's, are imitations of real life and manners, and which, accordingly, has been very much laboured by that author. It is for the probability of the narrative chiefly that I have ſo much commended Gulliver's Travels. Now, I appeal to every reader, whether ſuch a deſcription in thoſe Travels, as that of the battle in the church-yard, would not have intirely deſtroyed the credibility of them, and prevented their impoſing upon any body, as it is ſaid they did at firſt. This, therefore, I cannot help thinking a blemiſh, in a work which has otherwiſe a great deal of merit, and which I ſhould have thought perfect of the kind, if it had not been for this, and another fault that I find to it, namely, the author's appearing too much in it himſelf, who had nothing to do in it at

Digitized by Google

all *. By this the reader will understand that I mean his reflections, with which he begins his books, and sometimes his chapters.

And so much for the mock-heroic, or burlesque, which I call a fifth general character of style.

Of kin to this, is that kind of style which we may call the *ridiculous*; a style very much practised, but the nature of it not understood by every body. I use the word in the classical meaning, to signify what-

* The fable of this piece is, I think, an extraordinary effort both of genius and art; for, though it be very complex, taking in as great a variety of matter as, I believe, any heroic fable, it is so simple as to be easily enough comprehended in one view. And it has this peculiar excellency, that every incident of the almost infinite variety which the author has contrived to introduce into it, contributes, some way or other, to bring on the catastrophe, which is so artfully wrought up, and brought about by a change of fortune so sudden and surprising, that it gives the reader all the pleasure of a well written tragedy or comedy. And, therefore, as I hold the invention and composition of the fable to be the chief beauty of every poem, I must be of opinion, that Mr. Fielding was one of the greatest poetical geniuses of his age; nor do I think that his work has hitherto met with the praise that it deserves.

Digitized by Google

ever tends to excite laughter, whether perſon or thing. In our ſenſe of the word, when applied to a perſon, it ſignifies one who is himſelf the object of laughter; whereas, in the ſenſe the Romans uſed the word, it ſignified a perſon who excited laughter, without diſtinction, whether it was at his own expence, or at the expence of another, or without being at the expence of any body, if he preſented to us images that were riſible. According to the Roman uſe, therefore, of the word, when applied to perſons, it was equivocal, ſignifying two characters of men very different, one whom we call ridiculous, and another that we would rather call a wit, or a merry facetious fellow *. And it had the ſame ambiguity when applied to the words or ſayings of men, as when applied to their per-

* It was not, however, even in this ſenſe, a reſpectable character among the Romans; nor did Cato mean to pay a compliment to Cicero when he ſaid, upon hearing his jocoſe pleading for Muræna, in which he ridiculed the ſtoical philoſophy profeſſed by Cato,—'Quem ridiculum conſulem habemus!' And a profeſſed jeſter was a very contemptible character, both among the Romans and Greeks. He was called *Scurra* by the former, and γελωτοποιος, or βωμολοχος, by the latter.

Digitized by Google

ſons; for it denoted either what we would call a witty or pleaſant ſaying, that is, a ſaying that excites laughter not at itſelf, but at ſomething elſe *, or what we call a ridiculous ſaying, that is, a ſaying which makes us laugh at itſelf, and, by conſequence, at the perſon who uſes it. It is in the firſt of theſe ſenſes that I apply the word to ſtyle, meaning a ſtyle that makes us laugh, not at itſelf, but preſents to us other images of laughter. It is in this ſenſe that Cicero uſes the word, in his books *de Oratore*, where he lays down rules for the ridiculous, which he makes to be a conſiderable talent of an orator †. And it is in this ſenſe that Horace uſes the word, when he ſays,

——Ridiculum acri
Fortius ac melius magnas plerumque ſecat res.

Having thus ſettled the meaning of the word, the queſtion is next concerning

* In this ſenſe it is uſed by Cicero, when ſpeaking of an orator: He commends him for ſaying many things—'Non ſolum acutè, ſed ridiculè et facetè;' Lib. i. de Orat. c. 57. And, in the ſame ſenſe, Julius Cæſar, relating a *bon mot* of one of his ſoldiers, ſays, 'Non irridiculè dixit;' de Bell. Gall. Lib. i. c. 42.

† De Orat. Lib. ii. c. 58.

Digitized by Google

the thing itſelf: What is it that excites this extraordinary commotion in us, by which not only the countenance, but the whole body is altered; and, if it goes to any exceſs, may be ſaid to be convulſed? It is evidently not a mere bodily affection, but proceeds originally from the mind. What affection then, or paſſion of the mind, produces it? Is it joy? It is ſo in children, who laugh merely becauſe they are pleaſed; and it may be ſo likewiſe in men, whoſe underſtandings differ little from thoſe of children: But it is not ſo in men of ſenſe; far leſs is it grief, anger, indignation, or any ſuch like paſſion. Or what quality is it in the object, perſon, or thing, which excites it? It is not goodneſs, moſt certainly, fitneſs, or aptitude, for any purpoſe; neither is it malice, evil, or miſchievouſneſs; nor is it beauty, for that excites love and admiration, not laughter. But what ſhall we ſay of the contrary of beauty—deformity? Is it not the object of ridicule? And, I believe, upon inquiry, it will be found, that every thing ridiculous, I mean, what is the object of laughter and

Digitized by Google

deriſion, is, in ſome way or other, *deformed**.

So far, therefore, we are advanced in this inquiry, as to have found out that the object of laughter is deformity; But the queſtion ſtill remains, What is deformity? It is the oppoſite of beauty, as we have juſt now ſaid. But what is beauty? will a man aſk, who has a philoſophical turn, and wants to be at the bottom of this queſtion. This is a matter of no ſmall inquiry, and goes deep into philoſophy and the nature of things; but it will be ſufficient, for our preſent purpoſe, to ſay, that beauty conſiſts of a whole, and correſponding parts, in which there is nothing defective, nothing ſuperfluous or redundant, nothing that is unſuitable or foreign to the deſign of the whole. Beauty, therefore, neceſſarily implies ſome deſign, plan, or ſyſtem; and where that is miſſed of, or where we find any thing incongruous, diſſonant, or incom-

* This is the account that Cicero gives of the ridiculous: 'Locus autem, et regio quaſi ridiculi, turpitudine et deformitate quâdam continetur;' Lib. ii. de Orat. c. 58.

Digitized by Google

patible with that design, then have we the idea of deformity.

But if this be the object of ridicule, then is not only *folly*, but *vice*, ridiculous; for nothing is more discordant or incompatible with the system of a rational and social nature, and with the system of nature in general. But vice is the object of hatred and aversion; and, if it be accompanied with abilities and power, or fear and terror, not of ridicule, what shall we say then? Must we retract what we have laid down, that deformity is the subject of laughter? No; that will not be necessary; but we must add to the definition, and say that it is *the deformed without hurt or mischief**. So that whatever quality is hurtful or mis-

* Arist. Ars Poet. το γελοιον ἐστιν ἁμαρτημα τι και αισχος ἀνωδυνον, και ου φθαρτικον;' cap. 5.

And Cicero, in the passage above quoted, after having said that deformity is the subject of ridicule, adds, 'Nec 'insignis improbitas, et scelere juncta, nec rursus miseria insignis, agitata ridetur. Facinorosos enim majore 'quâdam vi, quam ridiculi, vulnerari volunt; miseros illudi nolunt, nisi si se forte jactant.' And, a little after, he says, 'Quamobrem materies omnis ridiculorum est in 'istis vitiis, quæ sunt in vita hominum, neque carorum,

Digitized by Google

chievous, either to the perſon who poſſeſſes it, or to any other, or to both, as is often the caſe, is not *ridiculous*.

But the queſtion is not yet anſwered, From what affection or diſpoſition of the mind this action of the muſcles of the face and agitation of the body proceeds? It is not from joy, grief, or any other of the paſſions above-mentioned; it is evident likewiſe, that we are not indifferent with reſpect to the perſon or thing at which we laugh. It remains, therefore, that it can only proceed from *contempt;* and, accordingly, we never laugh at what we value or eſteem, in ſo far, at leaſt, as we value and eſteem it. For it may happen that a perſon who, upon the whole, is valuable and eſtimable, has ſomething in him that is ridiculous.

But there is one thing farther that is ſtill to be accounted for concerning the ridicu-

' neque calamitoſorum, neque eorum qui ob facinus ad ' ſupplicium rapiendi videntur; eaque, bellè agitata, ri- ' dentur;' Lib. ii. de Orat. c. 59.

Digitized by Google

lous, and that is, how it comes to give us pleaſure; for that it does give pleaſure, and very high pleaſure too, to certain characters of men, is a fact that cannot be diſputed. And I ſay this pleaſure proceeds from our opinion that we are free from the blemiſh or deformity which we laugh at in others, and therefore are ſo far ſuperior to them. And hence it is, that vain and conceited men are moſt diſpoſed to laugh at the vanities and follies of others; whereas men of ſenſe and modeſty are the leaſt diſpoſed to do ſo*.

* Ariſtotle, in the 11th chapter of the 1ſt book of his Rhetoric, gives no other reaſon why the ridiculous is pleaſant, except that it raiſes laughter, and is a kind of play or diverſion—ὁμοιως δε και επει ἡ παιδια τῶν ἡδεων και πασα ἀνσις, και ὁ γιλως τῶν ἡδεων, ἀναγκη δε και τὸ γελοια ἡδεα εἰναι, και ἀνθρωπους και λογους και ἐργα. But the queſtion returns, Why is laughing pleaſant, and why does this kind of play and diverſion pleaſe ſome perſons much more than any other? For that all diverſion is naturally pleaſant, being an eaſe or remiſſion of the mind from labour and ſerious thought, cannot be denied. But why ſhould the view of deformity be ſo peculiarly pleaſant, as to excite in us a kind of convulſion of the body? I can aſſign no other reaſon but the one I have mentioned, viz. the compariſon we ſecretly make between the deformed object and ourſelves.

Digitized by Google

If the curious reader further inquire, how it comes that this pleaſure, which the ridiculous gives us, is expreſſed by laughing? the anſwer is, that every emotion or paſſion of the mind is denoted by ſome ſymptom or affection of the body, which by nature is made to accompany the emotion or paſſion of the mind, and which, therefore, may be called the language of nature, long prior to any language of human inſtitution. Why ſuch an action of the muſcles of the face, or the correſponding agitation of the body, ſhould be an indication of the ſenſe of the ridiculous, is, I believe, as difficult to explain, as why bluſhing ſhould be a ſign of ſhame, paleneſs or redneſs of the face, of fear or anger. All I know of the matter is, that, in ſome brutes, particularly in ſome dogs, a ſimilar action of their's is a ſign of pleaſure or joy. And, as the infants of our ſpecies in many things reſemble the brutes, ſo, as I have already obſerved, they expreſs their joy in that way; even men, when they are pleaſed, *ſmile*, which no doubt has ſome affinity to laughing; and, accordingly, it is expreſſed in Latin by a word which

Digitized by Google

denotes laughter in a ſmall degree, *ſubrideo* *.

From this account of the ridiculous, ſeveral obſervations will ariſe that are worth attending to: The firſt I ſhall mention is connected with what I have juſt now ſaid; and it is this—that men of great underſtanding, and ſublime genius, though they perceive the ridicule of things, will not delight in it, nor dwell upon it, but will rather turn their attention from it, becauſe truth and

* Homer, who, to uſe an expreſſion of Shakeſpear's, *knew all qualities of human dealings with a learned ſpirit*, has well diſtinguiſhed betwixt a *laugh* and a *ſmile*, for which laſt the Greeks have, I think, very properly, a diſtinct word, as we have in Engliſh, not as in the Latin and French, a word compounded with that which denotes laughter and the preposition. It is in that moſt beautiful paſſage, the ſweeteſt by far and moſt tender in the whole Iliad, where he contrives to make Hector meet Andromache and his child in the ſtreets of Troy. When he firſt met them, he ſtood and ſmiled, looking upon his child with ſilent joy. Ητοι ὁ μιν μειδησε, ἰδων ες παιδα σιωπη. Here if Hector had laughed, it would have been fooliſh and childiſh; but, when going to embrace his ſon, he ſhrunk from him into the boſom of his nurſe, frightened with the nodding of the plumage of his helmet, both he and the mother very properly laughed.

Ἐκ δε γελησεν πατηρ τε φιλος, και ποτνια μητηρ.

Iliad. 6. v. 461.

Digitized by Google

beauty are their purſuit, not deformity. And accordingly we find, that none of the great writers of antiquity, ſuch as Homer and Virgil, Plato, Ariſtotle, or even Demoſthenes, to whom, as an orator, it might have been uſeful, practiſed it. With reſpect to the laſt mentioned, we are expreſsly told, by the Halicarnaſſian, that he had no talent for it; and I believe that to have been the caſe of the other great authors above mentioned: For, if we have no delight in the thing, and do not practiſe it, we cannot excell in it. But the Halicarnaſſian does not tell us the reaſon why Demoſthenes had not this talent, which I take to be this, that he poſſeſſed much greater, and was a man of an exalted genius. The only exception almoſt I know to this rule is Cicero; but, though he was a great writer, he was far from being a great man; he had many weakneſſes and littleneſſes; and, among others, a great deal of vanity; and the neceſſary conſequence of this was, his delighting much in the ridiculous, in which he no doubt excelled Demoſthenes, as much as he fell ſhort of him in all the great talents of an orator. ‡

Digitized by Google

Another obſervation is, that, though weakneſs and folly, not vice, be the ſubject of ridicule, yet it is not every weakneſs or folly that is properly ridiculed. For natural infirmities and defects, whether of body or mind, ought not to be laughed at; becauſe, though they be imperfections, and therefore may be accounted deformities, yet, as the perſon is not to blame for them, they are not the ſubject of ridicule. But folly, and even miſery, *ſi ſe jactat*, as Cicero has obſerved*, are proper enough ſubjects of contempt and ridicule. Nothing, therefore, in the characters of men, is truly ridiculous, except that ſpecies of folly we call *vanity*, by which a man either pretends to valuable accompliſhments which he has not, or values himſelf upon mean and trivial qualities deſerving no praiſe. Such folly will make even natural infirmities and diſeaſes ridiculous—as when a weak man, whether by nature or by diſeaſe, pretends to be ſtrong as a Hercules, or an ugly man gives himſelf the airs of an Adonis, or a man naturally dull would impoſe himſelf upon us for a great wit and ge-

* De Orat. ubi ſupra.

Digitized by Google

nius. But, without vanity or affectation, no kind of defect or imperfection either of body or mind can make the perſon ridiculous, tho' they may be ridiculous in themſelves. For, whatever is unfit to ſerve the purpoſe for which it is intended, or conſiſts of diſcordant and incongruous parts, is by nature ridiculous, though the perſon to whom it belongs may not be ſo. Thus, for example, if I be dreſſed in the moſt fantaſtical manner that it is poſſible to imagine,

> Si curratus inæquali tonſore capillos
> Occurro,———
> ———ſi forte ſubucula pexæ
> Trita ſubeſt tunicæ, vel ſi toga diſſidet impar.
> HOR. EPIST. II. in fine.

and if I at the ſame time think myſelf well dreſſed, I am a coxcomb and ridiculous. But, if it be only the effect of negligence, or if for any particular purpoſe I ſhall think proper to put on a fool's coat, I am not ridiculous, though ſuch diſcordancies and incongruities in dreſs, or in any thing elſe, be no doubt in themſelves ridiculous, becauſe they are deformities.

Digitized by Google

Horace adds,

——Quid, mea cum pugnat ſententia ſecum;
Quod petiit, ſpernit; repetit quod nuper omiſit;
Æſtuat, et vitæ diſconvenit ordine toto;
Diruit, ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis?
Inſanire putas ſolennia me, neque rides.

And his friend was in the right for not laughing, at leaſt not laughing at Horace, unleſs he was at the ſame time vain of what he ought to have been aſhamed of. For, tho' ſuch inconſtancy and whimſicalneſs be in themſelves ridiculous, they do not make the perſon ſo without vanity or affectation. And there is a reaſon for not laughing even at the things themſelves, namely, that they often ruin the perſon's fortune, and make him lead an unquiet and miſerable life—ſo that they are not without hurt or miſchief.

In this matter, therefore, of the ridiculous, we muſt diſtinguiſh between things and perſons. A thing is ridiculous, that is, deformed, if it be not at the ſame time miſchievous. But a perſon is not ridiculous, though he may have ſuch deformity, if it be not accompanied with vanity and affectation.

Digitized by Google

A third obſervation is, that though vice be not of itſelf a ſubject of ridicule, nor a vitious perſon ridiculous, yet if to vice be joined vanity and affectation, then is ſuch a character, of all others, the moſt proper object of ridicule. If a man have other qualities that are good—if he be generous and humane, and do a great many good actions, though he may have vanities and follies that are very ridiculous; yet a man of ſenſe and good nature will not be diſpoſed to laugh at him, nor delight to ſee him expoſed: But if to vanity and folly is joined vice, and an ill diſpoſition of mind, then he will laugh moſt freely, and think the expoſing ſuch a perſon is a piece of juſtice done to the public. For this reaſon I think the character of the *Nabob*, in one of Mr. Foote's pieces, is one of the moſt proper ſubjects of ridicule that ever was exhibited on any ſtage, becauſe in that character we have joined to the affectation of being a fine ſpeaker and a man of taſte, the pride of wealth, the inſolence of power, and great cruelty and hard-heartedneſs; and, if the poet had brought him, in the concluſion of the piece,

Digitized by Google

to miſery and diſgrace, which certainly poetical juſtice required, I ſhould have thought the piece very compleat. On the other hand, as he has made his *Bankrupt* an honeſt man, ſo that he rejects with indignation all the fraudulent ſchemes of bankruptcy propoſed to him, he ſhould not have made him ridiculous in the end of the piece, by aſſenting to the opinion of every body with whom he converſes, and being always of the mind of him whom he laſt hears.

The two great writers in antient times of the ridiculous kind were Ariſtophanes and Lucian, both of them excellent in their different ways; but they were neither of them, in my judgment, ſublime geniuſes, nor did they attempt any thing of the high kind. For it appears to have been a maxim among the antients, that no man was formed by nature to excel in ways ſo different. And accordingly, we do not find in all antiquity any one poet, both of tragedy or epic, and of comedy, or ſo much as a player that acted both tragedy and comedy. The greateſt writer of this kind among us, greater I think than even his maſter the author of Hudibras, and

Digitized by Google

the greateſt of the kind perhaps that ever wrote, is Dean Swift. But, neither do I think that he was a ſublime genius. And he very wiſely, in my opinion, forbore to attempt either tragedy or heroic. And I ſhould have thought even his ridicule better, if it had been more cleanly, and if he had attended to what Cicero has ſaid of the ridiculous: —Hæc ridentur vel ſola, vel maxime, quæ notant et deſignant turpitudinem aliquam non turpiter; Lib. 2. de Orat. c. 58.

I have only further to obſerve on this ſubject, that, as the ridiculous expoſes incongruity, abſurdity, and deformity, of every kind, it is of neceſſity ſatirical, and, therefore, we very properly join together ſatire and ridicule. There may, however, be ſatire that is not ridiculous. Such is the ſatire which has for its object crimes or enormous vices, which ought not to be laughed at. This ſatire we commonly diſtinguiſh from the other by the name of *invective*.

And ſo much for the ridiculous, which may be called a ſixth general character of ſtyle.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XVII.

Of another general character of ſtyle, viz. the witty.—Nature of wit, and the three things which it requires.—Examples of this from the laconic apophthegms—from the ſayings of philoſophers, and from Cicero.—Wit ariſes from the ambiguity of words, either ſingle or in compoſition—from metaphor—ſimile—antitheſis.

THE next character of ſtyle I ſhall mention is the *witty*. *Wit* and *wiſdom* were formerly ſynonymous terms in Engliſh; but they now ſignify things very different; nor indeed is it eaſy to ſay what is meant by *wit*, according to the preſent uſe of the word. As it is uſed by ſome, it ſeems to be the ſame with the *ridiculous*; and certainly there is a great affinity betwixt the two. Accordingly, many of the inſtances of the ridiculous given by Cicero in his 2d book *de Oratore*, may be alſo ſaid properly to be witty. There is no doubt,

Digitized by Google

therefore, but that the ſame ſaying may be both witty and ridiculous; on the other hand, there is as little doubt that a thing ſaid may be witty, and not in the leaſt ridiculous; or, *vice verſa*, it may be ridiculous and not witty; ſo that there muſt be a difference betwixt the two. Some likewiſe confound *wit* and *humour;* but the diſtinction there is more evident. For they are ſo unlike one another, that if we attempt to join the two together, the humour is commonly loſt, as I ſhall ſhew when I come to define what humour is. Others again uſe the word in ſo vague a ſenſe, applying it to every thing they think pretty or genteel in writing or diſcourſe, that it is hardly poſſible to ſay what they mean by it. It is therefore neceſſary, if we have a mind to ſpeak intelligibly, to try whether we cannot define this quality of ſtyle better, I think, than it has hitherto been defined, at leaſt in any thing that I have ſeen written upon the ſubject: But it is to be remembered, that I do not pretend to comprehend in my definition every meaning that thoſe who uſe this word may give to it. But what I propoſe is to diſtinguiſh it from the other ge-

Digitized by Google

neral characters of ſtyle that I have mentioned, and from the next and laſt that I ſhall mention.

Of the ſublime I have ſaid, that what is principal in it is the ſenſe or matter, and that the expreſſion is but ſecondary; but of this character of ſtyle, I ſay that it conſiſts equally of both; for, in the firſt place, ſenſe, and a ſenſe not very obvious, or near the ſurface, is abſolutely required, otherwiſe it will not be true wit, nor indeed wit at all; and the deeper the ſenſe is, and the further removed from common apprehenſion, provided it be not an abſolute riddle, the better the wit. But, ſecondly, it is as neceſſary that the expreſſion ſhould be uncommon, and even ſurpriſing, otherwiſe it will not, in my apprehenſion, be wit, however great the ſenſe contained in the words may be. And, laſtly, the expreſſion muſt be ſhort; for wit will not bear to be diffuſed through many words, but muſt be pointed, and, as it were, darted upon us, ſo as to ſtrike us at once; and hence it is commonly ſaid of wit, that it is *piercing*.

Digitized by Google

Theſe, I think, are the outlines of this various and multiform thing we call *wit*, ſuch as, I think, will comprehend every ſpecies of it. But it will be neceſſary to explain it more particularly, and to illuſtrate what I have ſaid by examples.

To be convinced that the beſt ſenſe, without an uncommon turn of the expreſſion, will not make wit, we need only go through the laconic apophthegms collected by Plutarch, or the ſayings of the Greek philoſophers collected by Diogenes Laertius. In theſe there is, no doubt, a great deal of ſenſe; but it is in ſome of them only that there is wit, and theſe are ſuch of them as contain the ſenſe in few words, and with a turn of expreſſion that is uncommon and ſurpriſing. I will give a few examples, which will explain what I mean better than any words I can uſe, beginning with the laconic apophthegms.

Ageſilaus the Spartan king, was not only a great king and commander, but what the French call *un homme à bon mot;* and there are more good ſayings reported of him than

Digitized by Google

of any other Spartan. Among others, being aſked why the city of Sparta was not walled? 'Theſe,' ſaid he, (ſhewing a body of Spartans armed,) 'are the walls of Spar-'ta *.' Expreſſed in this way, it was both ſenſe and wit; for it was an uncommon expreſſion to call men the walls of a city. At the ſame time, it has that brevity and pungency that wit requires: But, if he had ſaid ſimply and plainly, that a city was better defended by the valour of its citizens than by walls, it would have been ſenſe and truth, but not wit; and this I think is the caſe of another anſwer which he made to the ſame queſtion, and which is likewiſe recorded by Plutarch in the ſame place. 'A town,' ſays he, 'ought not to be fortified by ſtone and timber, but by the virtues of its inhabitants.' This, we may obſerve, has a rhetorical turn, and many ſuch things are to be found in the Greek orators; but I would not call it wit. Again, the ſame Ageſilaus, when he was recalled out of Aſia, a conſiderable part of which he had con-

* Plutarch's Morals, edit. Froben. p. 155.

Digitized by Google

quered, to defend his own country that was attacked by the Athenians and Thebans, who had been bribed by the Perſian money, which had upon it the ſtamp of an *archer*, ſaid, when he left the country, that he was driven out of Aſia by thirty thouſand archers, ſo many pieces of that coin having been ſent to Athens and Thebes *. Now, if he had ſaid plainly, that he was driven out of Aſia by the money of the Perſian king, not by his arms, it would not have been wit, but only plain truth. And what makes the ſaying more ſurpriſing at firſt ſight, and conſequently gives it the greater poignancy, is, that an army, ſuch as his, of heavy armed men, ſhould be overcome by an army of archers.

Agis, another king of Sparta, being aſked ſeveral times by a worthleſs and impertinent fellow, who was the beſt man in Sparta? anſwered at laſt, 'He that is leaſt 'like to you †.' This is wit as well as ſatire; for it was an anſwer which the man who aſked the queſtion certainly did not expect,

* Plutarch, p. 155. † Ibid, p. 169.

Digitized by Google

and ſurpriſes the reader very near as much as it did him. And, ſince he was urged to anſwer ſo impertinent a queſtion, it could not be ſaid to be ill-bred.

Antalcidas the Spartan, the ſame, as I ſuppoſe, that concluded the peace with the Perſian king which bore his name, anſwered to an Athenian that called the Spartans unlearned, 'It is true indeed,' ſaid he, 'we alone 'of all the Greeks have learned nothing 'bad from you *.' This was likewiſe both wit and ſatire, and alſo a great truth; for the Athenians, when they became corrupted themſelves, did, by their wit and eloquence, contribute very much to corrupt the reſt of Greece.

As to the ſayings of the Greek philoſophers, collected by Diogenes Laertius, there is more ſenſe in them than is any where to be found in ſo few words; but there is wit in very few of them, becauſe they want that uncommon turn of expreſſion, which, as has been ſhown, is eſſential to wit. Nor

* Plutarch, p. 160.

Digitized by Google

was it to be expected that men, who were intent upon diſcovering the nature and truth of things, ſhould ſtudy figures and forms of expreſſion for the purpoſe only of catching the applauſe of the vulgar. The wittieſt of all the philoſophers was Ariſtippus the ſcholar of Socrates. At the ſame time, he was the moſt worthleſs, and, for that very reaſon, the wittieſt; becauſe the uſe he made of his philoſophy was to flatter and make his court to the great and rich, in order to partake of their good things, in the enjoyment of which he made the happineſs of life to conſiſt. Now it is well known how much wit, if diſcreetly uſed, will make you a favourite of ſuch men. And indeed flattery, without that ſeaſoning, muſt ſoon become nauſeous to a man of the leaſt delicacy of taſte.

This being the character of Ariſtippus, we are not to wonder, that, of all the philoſophers and men of letters who frequented the court of Dionyſius, he was the man who pleaſed the tyrant the moſt *,

* Diogenes Laert. in vit. Ariſtippi, initio.

Digitized by Google

though it appears that, in ſome of his witty ſayings, he uſed a good deal of freedom with the tyrant himſelf: As when Dionyſius aſked him, why philoſophers came ſo much to the gates of the rich, but the rich not to their gates? becauſe, ſays he, philoſophers know what they want, whereas the rich do not *. But thoſe, who, like Ariſtippus, make their court to the great, know very well that flattery, in order to make it palatable, requires a little zeſt of that kind.

Of kin to this ſaying was another in anſwer to one, who aſked him the ſame queſtion, why the philoſophers were always to be ſeen at the gates of the rich? Phyſicians, ſays he, in like manner, are to be ſeen at the gates of the ſick; but it is not, for that reaſon, better to be the ſick man than the phyſician †.

Having employed an orator to plead a cauſe for him, and having gained it, the orator, meaning to inſult philoſophy and Socrates, aſked him, with an air of triumph,

* Diogenes Laert. in vit. Ariſtippi, c. 69.

† Ibid. c. 70.

Digitized by Google

of what uſe now was Socrates to you? Of this, anſwered Ariſtippus, that what you ſaid of me was true *.

A man wanted that Ariſtippus ſhould take his ſon and inſtruct him, for which Ariſtippus demanded a price that the other thought extravagant; for, ſays he, I could buy a ſlave for that price. Do, ſays Ariſtippus, and then you will have two †. Here, I think, is true wit; for there is great ſenſe in the ſaying, though not obvious to one who does not know that it is only philoſophy which makes a man truly free. And, at the ſame time, the expreſſion is as ſhort and ſurpriſing as can well be.

It may be reckoned wit when an argument is cleverly turned againſt a man. Of this kind was what Ariſtippus anſwered to Diogenes, whom he found waſhing ſome herbs that he was preparing for his dinner. If, ſays the Cynic, you could dine upon herbs, you would not make court to tyrants. If you could live and converſe with men,

* Diogenes Laert. in vit. Ariſtippi, c. 71.

† Ibid. 72.

Digitized by Google

replies Ariſtippus, you would not dine upon herbs *.

It is, I think, for the credit of the other Greek philoſophers, that there are but few

* Diogenes Laert. in vit. Ariſtippi, c. 68. Horace, in his epiſtle to Scæva, Lib. i. Epiſt. 17. mentions this ſaying of Ariſtippus;

Si pranderet olus patienter, regibus uti
Nollet Ariſtippus. Si ſciret regibus uti,
Faſtidiret olus, qui me notat. v. 14.

Horace, it may be obſerved, was a little deſultory in his philoſophy, as he tells us himſelf; for ſometimes he was a rigid Stoic:

Virtutis veræ cuſtos rigiduſque ſatelles;

But he adds,

Nunc in Ariſtippi furtim præcepta relabor,
Et mihi res, non me rebus, ſubmittere conor.
Lib. i. Ep. 1.

The meaning of which laſt line is, that, whereas the Stoics ſubmitted with reſignation to the lot which Providence had aſſigned them, and only endeavoured to act well the part which was allotted to them in the drama of human life, Ariſtippus, not contented with that lot, endeavoured to make a fortune for himſelf. And hence it is that Horace, in the ſame epiſtle to Scæva, deſcribes him, 'Tentantem majora;' but he adds, 'Fere præſentibus æquum.' And it was no doubt his character, as Laertius informs us, in the beginning of his life, that, though he aimed at the

Digitized by Google

ſayings recorded of them which can be called witty; and I ſhall only mention one of Arceſilaus, the founder of the Middle Academy, who, being aſked, why ſo many of

higheſt fortune, he could ſuit himſelf to the loweſt. Although Horace, in this paſſage, ſays, that he only ſlipt into the precepts of Ariſtippus, as it were, by ſtealth, and imperceptibly even to himſelf; yet it appears to me, that, in the practice of life, he followed much more the philoſophy of Ariſtippus than that of Epicurus, which he profeſſed. For Epicurus, though, like Ariſtippus, he made happineſs conſiſt in bodily pleaſure, yet he held that the greateſt pleaſure of that kind was to be found in temperance and ſober living; therefore he lived moſt frugally and penuriouſly in his garden, without going near the great and rich; and he boaſted, that he could live upon a penny a-day; whereas his friend Metrodorus required two-pence. Ariſtippus, on the other hand, made his happineſs conſiſt in coſtly and delicate living; and, in this reſpect, he preferred his life to that of the Cynic, who lived miſerably, as he thought, upon the meaneſt and cheapeſt things:

——Rectius hoc, et
Splendidius multo eſt, equus ut me portet, alat rex.

Now it is evident, not only from what Suetonius tells us in the life of Horace, but from the account which Horace gives of himſelf, that he did, in this reſpect, follow the precepts of Ariſtippus; for he lived very much with Mecænas, and was ſo often at his table, that Auguſtus, in a letter of his, which Suetonius has preſerved to us, 'In vita Horatii,' calls him the *pa-*

Digitized by Google

all other ſects went over to the Epicureans, but none ever came from them? anſwered, That men might be made eunuchs, but eunuchs never could become men*.

Cicero alſo has furniſhed us examples of witty ſayings, where the wit conſiſted as much in the turn of expreſſion as in the thought. There was one P. Cornelius, who was a great thief, but very brave, and a good general. He was choſen conſul, for

raſite of Mecænas. And, indeed, in this epiſtle to Scæva, he very plainly declares himſelf a follower of Ariſtippus, and adviſes Scæva to follow him likewiſe. When he came, however, to be in the decline of life, he began to be of another opinion; and I am perſuaded that, where he ſays,

> Dulcis inexpertis cultura potentis amici;
> Expertus metuit.———

he made the application to himſelf. And, in an epiſtle to Mecænas, anſwering one from him, in which he required that Horace ſhould come to him at the time he had promiſed, he plainly tells him, that he could not now give him the attendance that he had formerly given him; and that, rather than do it, he would reſign every thing he had got from him; Epiſt. vii. Lib. 1.

* Laert. in vit. Arceſilai, c. 43.

Digitized by Google

carrying on a very dangerous war, by the intereſt of C. Fabricius, his profeſſed enemy, to whom when he returned thanks for acting ſo diſintereſted a part, 'You owe me 'no thanks,' ſaid he, 'if I choſe rather to be 'robbed than ſold as a ſlave *.' This was wit, becauſe it was ſhort, pungent, and unexpected; and it is not only witty, but it has a good deal of the ridiculous in it, as it expoſed the knavery of the man, and therefore it would naturally raiſe a laugh in thoſe that heard it. Of the ſame kind was what Fabius Maximus ſaid to one Livius Salinator, who had loſt the town of Tarentum, but was of great uſe in aſſiſting Maximus to retake it. Of this ſervice Salinator putting Maximus in mind, and telling him that it was by his means he had taken the town, 'No doubt,' ſays he, 'if you had not 'loſt it, I ſhould not have taken it †.'

In all theſe, and ſuch like inſtances, it is the uncommon turn given to the thought that makes the wit of the ſaying, which

* Cicero de Orat. Lib. ii. c. 66.

† Idem, ibid. c. 67.

Digitized by Google

otherwiſe would be nothing but plain ſenſe. In many other ways ſuch turns might be given to the thought and expreſſion; and, if there be ſenſe at the ſame time, we will call it ſmart, clever, and witty. Of this kind there is a great deal in Mr. Fielding's work, which I have quoted more than once, the Hiſtory of Tom Jones, in which there is no leſs wit than manners and characters. I ſhall not quote inſtances, becauſe they are to be found in every page of the work; but I will give one inſtance more of this kind of wit from a famous ſaying of Lewis XI. king of France, who had received an injury from ſome perſon before he was king, and while he was only Duke of Orleans, and was adviſed to reſent it after he became king: 'No,' ſays he, 'a king of France ought not to avenge the injuries of the Duke of Orleans.' This was both ſenſible and witty; but, if he had only ſaid, that now, when he was king, he ought not to reſent the injuries that he had received when he was only Duke of Orleans, the wit of it would have been intirely loſt.

Digitized by Google

There is one way of giving an uncommon and ſurpriſing turn to the expreſſion, and ſo making wit, that is very well known. It is by ambiguity or double meaning, and this either of ſingle words, or of a compoſition of them; I mean a phraſe or ſentence. The firſt kind is well known by the name of a *pun*, and, when there is ſenſe in it, joined with ſatire or ridicule, it may be reckoned a ſpecies of wit. It was not unknown among the antients, though, I believe, leſs practiſed among them than among us. Cicero gives an example of it that happened in a trial where a very little man was produced as a witneſs. As it cannot be rendered into Engliſh, I have given the Latin words below *. The other kind is where the ambiguity is not in a ſingle word, but in ſeveral, making a ſentence. It is diſtinguiſhed among us from the other by the name of *a play upon words*. This ſort of wit appears to have been more practiſed among the antients; and Cicero gives us

* Puſillus teſtis proceſſit. *Licet*, inquit, *rogare*, Philippus? Tum quæſitor properans, *modo breviter*. Hic ille, *non accuſabis; perpuſillum rogabo*. Cic. de Orat. lib. 2. c 60.

Digitized by Google

ſeveral inſtances of it *. Both the two ſurpriſe and pleaſe likewiſe, if there be ſenſe in them; but they are not at all fit for grave compoſition. Nor does Cicero, though a great joker, and very witty, more, I think, than became a man of conſular dignity, and the firſt ſenator in Rome †, uſe them in his orations, or in any of his philoſophical works,

* One of them is an invitation, which a joker of thoſe days gave to himſelf to ſup with one Sextius, who wanted an eye. 'Cœnabo, inquit, apud te huic 'luſco familiari meo. Sextio, *uni enim locum eſſe video*,' where the joke turned upon the laſt words, which might ſignify, that there was place either for one gueſt more, or one eye. Another inſtance he gives is of a ſaying of one Nero upon a thieviſh ſlave: 'Ridiculum eſt illud 'Neronianum vetus in furace ſervo. *Solum eſſe cui domi 'nihil ſit nec obſignatum nec occluſum*;' of which the joke was, as Cicero tells us, that the words applied equally to a good or bad ſlave; *Ibid. c.* 61. This is ſaid by Cicero to be *ridiculous*, and ſo it is as well as the other, becauſe they allude the one to bodily deformity, and the other to knavery. But he gives an inſtance afterwards of a double meaning of this ſort, which is only witty, but not ridiculous. 'Africano illi majori, coronam ſibi 'in convivio ad caput accommodanti, cum ea ſæpius 'rumperetur, P. Licinius Varus, *Noli mirari*, inquit, ſi 'non convenit; *caput enim magnum eſt*.' He adds, *Hoc 'laudabile et honeſtum*;' Ibid. That is, not ridiculous.

† There was a collection of his jokes and ſmart ſayings made in his own time; and Dr. Middleton, in his

Digitized by Google

The next kind of wit I ſhall mention is that which conſiſts in *metaphor*, a figure ſo much uſed in this kind of ſtyle, that it may be called the figure of wit; and, according to Ariſtotle, it conſtitutes chiefly what he called the το αστειον, anſwering to the Latin word *urbanum* or *urbanitas*, a term which comes nearer to the ſignification of our word *wit*, than any other that I know in Greek or Latin; but it comprehended, beſides *wit*, genteel pleaſantry, and likewiſe politeneſs, as is evident from many paſſages of antient authors, and particularly one in Horace, where he mentions, as belonging to the character of *Urbanus*, the greateſt of all politeneſs, that of ſinking or lowering yourſelf in company, in order that you may not offend the vanity of thoſe with whom you converſe."

life of Cicero, vol. II. 8vo. p. 294. and 334. has given us ſeveral of them. They gave great offence to many, and ſometimes, I believe, did much miſchief; for it is not unlikely that his pun, when ſpeaking of Octavius, he ſaid, that the young man was *laudandus, ornandus et tollendus*, upon the word *tollendus*, coſt him his life, and the republic its liberty. And, it is certain, that while he was in Pompey's camp, before the battle of Pharſalia, his jokes were ſo ſevere, and ſo unſeaſonable, that Pompey wiſhed him upon the other ſide; and then, ſays he, you will begin not to deſpiſe us, but to fear us.

Digitized by Google

Urbani parcentis viribus, atque
Extenuantis ſeſe conſulto. ———

It is not, however, every metaphor, as Ariſtotle has obſerved *, that makes wit,

* Ariſtotle has beſtowed no leſs than two chapters, viz. the 10th and 11th of his 3d book of rhetoric, upon the τὰ ἀστεια, or the τὰ ἐυδοκιμουντα, another word that he uſes, and which, I think, comes likewiſe very near our word *wit*, becauſe it ſignifies thoſe ſayings which procure a man praiſe and applauſe. As he is an author who has defined more and better than any other, it is from him chiefly that I have taken the definition of wit. And, firſt, he has required that there ſhall be truth and ſenſe in the witticiſm, and ſuch as does not lie too near the ſurface; δεῖ δὲ ἀεὶ προσειναι το λεγομενον ἀληθες και μη ἐπιπολαιον, c. 13. And again, in c. 10. he ſays, ὥτε τα ἐπιπολαια τῶν ἐυθυμηματων ἐυδοκιμει, (ἐπιπολαια γαρ λεγομεν τὰ παντι δηλα, καὶ ἃ μηδεν δει ζητησαι), ὥτε ὁσα εἰρημενα ἀγνοουμενα ἐστι, αλλ' ὁσων ἡ ἁμα νοουμενων ἡ γνωσις γινεται, καὶ ἐι μη προτερον ὑπηρχεν, ἡ μικρον ὑστεριζει ἡ διανοια. There cannot, I think, be a better definition than this of what may be called the *matter* of wit, that is, the thought, independent of the expreſſion. For, ſays he, it muſt not be upon the ſurface (that is the meaning of the Greek word ἐπιπολαιον) ſo as to be obvious to every body, nor muſt it lie too deep, ſo as not to be underſtood, or, at leaſt, not eaſily underſtood; for then it is a riddle; but it muſt be betwixt theſe two, ſo as to be apprehended by the mind, if not immediately, at leaſt upon a very ſhort reflection.

Digitized by Google

or, as he calls it, the τὸ ἀστειον; for there is no trope or figure of words more common, being uſed, as we have ſeen, not only for ornament, but for neceſſity. But it muſt be a metaphor not commonly uſed, or, at leaſt, not commonly applied to that ſubject; and it muſt be ſtrong and lively, ſetting the thing as it were before our eyes, and at the ſame time conveying ſome important meaning; then it will have all the characters of wit above-mentioned, for it will convey ſenſe in the ſhorteſt way poſſible, that is, by a ſingle word, and at the ſame time in an uncommon way, and ſuch as will both ſur-

But, that the thought ſhould be ſuch, is not, according to Ariſtotle, ſufficient. There muſt alſo be a certain turn of expreſſion. For, ſays he, ἀναγκη δε και λεξιν και ἐνθυμηματα ταυτα ἐιναι αστεια, ὁσα ποιει ἡμιν μαθησιν ταχειαν; Ib. And he particularly mentions the metaphor as one way of giving wit to the expreſſion. But, ſays he, the metaphor muſt not be far fetched, or ἀλλοτρια, as he calls it, for then it is difficult to be underſtood. Neither muſt it be too common or obvious; for then it will not ſtrike or ſurpriſe us. And, further, it ought to ſet the thing as it were cloſe before our eyes, πρὸ ὀμματων ποιειν, by which the expreſſion acquires a kind of life, and what he calls ἐνεργεια,

Digitized by Google

priſe and pleaſe. Of ſuch metaphors uſed in his time, Ariſtotle gives ſome examples *.

A ſimile may be called a metaphor extended, as a metaphor is a ſimile contracted; it is therefore natural that there ſhould be wit likewiſe in a ſimile. But it is not every ſimile, any more than every metaphor, that is witty; for it is required that it ſhould be ſhort. An Homeric ſimile, therefore, with a long tail, as Mr. Perault expreſſes it, is not wit, but belongs to a

* Of this kind is what one Leptines, whom he mentions, ſaid concerning the deſtruction of Lacedæmon, that they ought not to ſuffer Greece to become *one-eyed* or *borgne*, as the French expreſs it in one word. ὐκ ἐαν περιιδεῖν τὴν Ἑλλαδα ἑτεροφθάλμον; Ibid. c. 10. meaning, as I ſuppoſe, that Athens and Lacedæmon were the two eyes of Greece. Another example of this is what Pericles ſaid of the iſland of Ægina, that it was λημη τῦ Πειραιεως; Ibid. which may be tranſlated an eye-ſore of the Athenian harbour of the Piræum; a metaphor which, it ſeems, was not ſo common in Greek as in Engliſh, otherwiſe it would not have been quoted by Ariſtotle as wit. Of this kind are two metaphors uſed in Engliſh, by which we call *old age* the *evening*, and *youth* the *morning of life*. Theſe metaphors were alſo uſed in Greek, as appears from a paſſage in Longinus.

Digitized by Google

ſtyle quite different. Secondly, it muſt not be common or obvious, otherwiſe it will not ſurpriſe, which all wit ought to do. And, thirdly, it muſt convey ſome important meaning; for, ſuppoſing it to have the other two requiſites, but to want this, it will be called not wit, but a quaint conceit *.

It is the great uſe which wit makes of metaphor and ſimile, that has induced Mr. Locke to make it conſiſt altogether in the reſemblance of things; but, I think, it is evident, from the examples I have given, that there may be wit, and very true wit, without metaphor, ſimile, or any thing relating to likeneſs or reſemblance; ſo that I doubt Mr. Locke has proceeded upon too narrow views of the ſubject, when he made wit conſiſt in finding out the reſemblances

* Neither did this kind of wit by ſimiles eſcape Ariſtotle; for he tells us, that ſimiles are witty for the ſame reaſon that metaphors are; ἐισι δὲ καὶ αἱ εἰκονες, ὥσπερ, εἰρηται καὶ ἐν τοις ἀνω, αἰει ἐυδοκιμεσαι τροπον τινα μεταφοραί; αἱ γαρ ἐκ δυοιν λεγονται ὥσπερ ἡ ἀναλογον μεταφορά; c. 11. And, in the preceeding chapter, he gives an example of a ſimile of Pericles, in which he compares the deſtroying the youth of a city to the taking the ſpring from the year.

Digitized by Google

of things, as well as when he made judgment consist in discovering their differences.

There is also another figure belonging to wit, viz. antithesis, which is a common figure, as well as metaphor and simile; but a witty antithesis must not be common, for it must set in opposition two things that are not commonly opposed; and it must have this quality, belonging to all kinds of wit, of containing some truth not common or trivial *.

As wit necessarily requires that there should be something uncommon, both in the thought and expression, Aristotle has well observed, that the wit is most pungent when the meaning comes out altoge-

* It is in this *figure* belonging to the composition, and as opposed to *tropes*, that Aristotle makes the wit of expression chiefly consist: For, after having explained the matter of wit in the passage above quoted, he adds, Κατὰ δὲ τὴν λέξιν τῷ μὲν σχήματι ἐαν ἀντικειμένως λέγηται; Ib. c. 10. Then he proceeds to speak of the wit that consists in the trope of metaphor, τοις δ' ὀνόμασι ἐαν ἐχῃ μεταφορὰν, &c.

Digitized by Google

ther different from what was expected in the beginning; for then it becomes very ſtriking and ſurpriſing, and the mind ſays to itſelf, 'This is the truth of the matter, 'but I was miſtaken *.'

Thus I have endeavoured to define this undefineable thing called *wit;* and I have made it to be, 'Senſe not common, ſhortly 'conveyed in a way not common,' whether by metaphor, ſimile, antitheſis, words ambiguous, or in any other way not ordinary, and therefore ſurpriſing. By this definition it is ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed from

* Ἐστι δε και τὰ ἀστεια ταπλειστα δια μεταφορας, και ἐκ τȣ προς εξαπαταν, (l. προεξαπαταν), μαλλον γαρ γινεται δηλον, ὁτι ἐμαθε, παρα τὸ ἐναντιως εχειν—και ἐοικε λεγειν ἡ ψυχη ὡς αληθως, ἐγω δ' ἡμαρτον; Ib. c. 11. And he gives an inſtance of a ſaying that was become proverbial, but was firſt uſed by Steſichorus the poet, who, ſpeaking of the calamity that was to befal a people, of having their country laid waſte by an enemy, ſaid, that their graſshoppers would ſing upon the ground; meaning that all their trees would be cut down. For the Greek word τεττιξ, or the Latin *cicada*, does not denote what we call *graſshopper*, but what the French call *cigale*, an inſect which ſits upon trees during the ſummer months in the warm countries, and really ſings, or makes a muſical noiſe, which our graſshoppers do not, any more than they ſit upon trees.

Digitized by Google

the ridiculous, though they be not incompatible; and it often happens, in fact, as I have ſhewn, that they go together; and how it is to be diſtinguiſhed from humour, will appear in the next chapter.

As to the pleaſure which *wit* affords us, Ariſtotle, I think, has well accounted for it. He ſays, that, if to learn be pleaſant, as it certainly is to the rational mind, to learn eaſily and quickly muſt certainly be very pleaſant; and this is the caſe when we learn by one, or a very few words. Now, uncommon metaphor, ſhort ſimiles, by which we are led to find reſemblances in things that we knew nothing of before, teach us in this way, eſpecially if there be, at the ſame time, antitheſis, becauſe every thing is beſt illuſtrated by its contrary. And if we at firſt miſapprehend it, and then are ſet right, it is thereby made evident to us, that we learn what we did not know before *.

* Ariſtotle begins his chapter (Rh. l. 3. c. 10.) upon the αστειον, by laying down the foundation that there is for the pleaſure of it in nature, ἀρχὴ δ' ἐστω ἡμιν αὐτη· το γὰρ μαιθανειν ῥαδιως, ἡδυ πᾶσι φυσει ἐστι, τω δε ὀνοματα σημαινει τι· ὡστε ὁσα των ὀνοματων ποιει ἡμιν μαθησιν, ἡδιστας

Digitized by Google

I have been the fuller upon the ſubject of wit, that it is a colour of ſtyle which is predominant, more than any other, in the writings of the preſent age, as well as in our converſation; the reaſon of which is, that our taſte of ſtyle is commonly formed

αἱ μεν γαρ γλωτται ἀγνωτες, τὰ δε κυρια ἰσμεν, ἡ δε μεταφορα ποιει τουτο μαλιστα. Then he proceeds to tell us that the ſimiles of the poets have the ſame effect; for a ſimile is a metaphor, only lengthened out, but for that reaſon it pleaſes leſs; ἐστι ἡ εικων, καθαπερ εἰρηται προτερον, μεταφορα, διαφερουσα προσθεσει, διο ἧττον ἡδυ, ὁτι μακροτερως, και ὐ λεγει ὡς τουτο ἐκεινο. The meaning of which laſt words, as he has explained it in his Poetics, *cap.* 4. is, that a metaphor is a propoſition in a ſingle word, affirming that this is that. Then he goes on to inform us, that the learning muſt be quick; ἀναγκη δη και λεξιν και ὑπομνηματα ταυτα ἐιναι ἀστεια, ὁσα ποιει ἡμιν μαθησιν ταχειαν. And, in the next chapter, he further tells us that the wit is ſo much the greater by how much the thing is ſaid in fewer words, and by way of antitheſis or oppoſition; the reaſon of which is, that by oppoſition the thing is better learned, and, by few words, more quickly, ὁσῳ ἀν ἐλαττονι και ἀντικειμενως λεχθη, τοσουτῳ ἐυδοκιμει μαλλον, τὸ δ' αιτιον, ὁτι ἡ μαθησις δια το μεν ἀντικεισθαι, μαλλον, δια δε το ἐν ὀλιγῳ, θαττον γινεται; an expreſſion ſo ſhort, and at the ſame time ſo clear, and what we would call clever, that, if the ſubject were capable of wit, it might be ſaid to be witty. It is at leaſt a ſpecimen of Attic brevity, and the genuine didactic ſtyle.

Digitized by Google

upon the ſtudy of ſuch authors as Tacitus, Seneca, and the faſhionable French writers of the preſent age, to whom I would adviſe an author, who affects this ſtyle, to add Portius Latro, and the other declaimers, whoſe clever and witty arguments Seneca the rhetorician has collected. And, however various and undefineable a thing wit is commonly reckoned to be, I am much miſtaken if the three characteriſtical marks I have given of it will not agree to every thing which a man of ſenſe will call wit.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XVIII.

The difference betwixt humour and a humouriſt.—One ſpecies of humour is the imitation of the humouriſt—a general definition of it—Uſe of it in modern comedy—incompatible with wit.

I COME now to ſpeak of the laſt general character of ſtyle I ſhall mention, and that is, the ſtyle of *humour*. *Humour*, applied to the body, or to the temper of the mind, is very well underſtood; nor is it, even in the laſt ſenſe, a word peculiar to the Engliſh language; but, applied to ſtyle, it is peculiar, and is not to be tranſlated, by one word, into any other language that I know. In this ſenſe, it is a word generally as little underſtood as the one we have endeavoured to define; I mean *wit*. And by ſome they are uſed as ſynonymous terms, and, by many more, there is no determinate meaning applied to either. 8

Digitized by Google

The eaſieſt way, I believe, to come at the true meaning of it, will be to conſider what is the meaning of the word *humouriſt*, which, by its ſound, ought to have ſome connection with it. Now, the meaning of this word is pretty much ſettled; for I think it is agreed by all, that a humouriſt is a man of a character ſingular and odd. Are then an humouriſt and a man of humour the ſame? They certainly are not. But ſuppoſe that a man, though no humouriſt himſelf, has the faculty of imitating, in ſpeaking or in writing, ſuch a character, ſhould we not ſay that he was a man of humour? And I think every body muſt agree in giving him that name.

But is he the only man of humour? or is this but one kind of humour? Suppoſe the perſon has the faculty of repreſenting other characters, that are not whimſical or odd, is not he likewiſe a man of humour? If ſo, then humour muſt be the talent of imitating characters and manners in general. But, I am afraid that, as the laſt definition was too narrow, this is too

Digitized by Google

general; for it would take in all poets, even ſuch as, like Homer and Virgil, imitate heroic characters. But nobody ever ſaid that Homer, Virgil, Sophocles, or Euripides had humour.

It appears, therefore, that the imitation of high characters and manners does not make what we call humour. Does humour then conſiſt in the imitation of the characters of men in low or middle life, ſuch as the perſonages in comedy are? If this were ſo, then we ſhould ſay, that there was humour in the comedies of Terence, or in the imitations of characters, ſuch as Lord Townly, Sir Charles Eaſy, or Young Bevil, in our own comedies. But this, I think, can hardly be ſaid. It is not, therefore, the imitation of all comic characters that conſtitutes humour. Neither is it the imitation of heroic characters; yet it appears that humour conſiſts in the imitation of certain characters. Of what kind then are the characters which it imitates, beſides thoſe we have already mentioned, viz. the odd and whimſical?

Digitized by Google

And I ſay it is all other characters that have a mixture of the ridiculous in them. This makes a great affinity betwixt ridicule and humour; but the difference is, that what is only *deſcribed* by what we have called the ridiculous ſtyle, is *imitated* by humour *.

And here we may ſee the reaſon why humour makes us laugh more perhaps than any thing elſe in ſpeaking or writing. It is becauſe it imitates the ridiculous, which is the ſtrongeſt and moſt lively way of ſetting it before our eyes; for we cannot be ſo much moved by any deſcription of a ridiculous perſon, as by having him ſhewn to us.

Humour, therefore, I define *the imitation of characters ridiculous;* and this definition comprehends the imitation of the character of humouriſts, becauſe ſuch characters have always a mixture, more or leſs,

* See the difference explained betwixt *deſcribing* a character and *imitating* it, p. 124.

Digitized by Google

of the ridiculous. It belongs to a figure of compoſition, of which I have already treated under the name of the *Ethic*; and I might very properly have explained it when I was upon that ſubject; but I thought it was better to defer it till I came to ſpeak of wit, with which it is commonly thought to have a great connection.

By far the greateſt part of the characters of modern comedy are characters of humour; for, ſince comedy ceaſed to be the repreſentation of the manners of common life, the odd and the ridiculous predominate in it; and it is now rather an entertainment for making us laugh, than moral and inſtructive as it was formerly. Nor are many of our comedies much different from an entertainment which profeſſes nothing elſe but to make us laugh; I mean *farce*.

But our comedy-writers ſhould take care not to mix wit with their humour, two things, which, though ſuppoſed to have a great connection, and by ſome to be the ſame, are quite different, and almoſt incom-

Digitized by Google

patible. For all kind of ethic writing, as I obſerved before, muſt be in the ſimple ſtyle; and, if it be witty, or anywiſe figured in the compoſition, it will not be underſtood to come from the heart, or to be the genuine repreſentation of the character of the ſpeaker or writer. And this holds particularly in low characters; for, if the poet introduces them ſpeaking wittily, he goes out of the character altogether, and it is evident the wit is his own, not that of the perſon who ſpeaks it. An inſtance of this I remember in the Beaux Stratagem, where *Scrub* (which is undoubtedly a character of humour), in deſcribing his occupation in the family, is made to ſay, 'On Friday I go to 'market; on Saturday I draw warrants, 'and on Sunday I draw beer,' where the affectation of wit, by the play upon the word *draw*, deſtroys the native ſimplicity and humour of the character.

I do not know any work in Engliſh, nor indeed any work, in which there is more humour, as well as wit, than in Fielding's Hiſtory of Tom Jones. All the characters in

Digitized by Google

it are characters of humour, that is, of the ridiculous kind, except that of Mr. Allworthy, Jones himself, Sophia, and Blifil, who is a complete villain, and, perhaps, two or three more; but he has taken care never to mix his wit with his humour; for all the wit in the piece is from himself, or, at least he does not put it into the mouth of his characters of humour.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XIX.

Particular characters of ſtyle.—Firſt, the ſtyle of converſation—quite different from that of public ſpeaking.—The epiſtolary ſtyle—more conciſe than that of converſation.—The didactic ſtyle—of two kinds.—The different manner of the two didactic poems of Virgil and Lucretius.—The hiſtorical ſtyle.—It conſiſted of two parts among the antients—narrative and rhetorical.—Is only narrative among the moderns—but the narrative often too rhetorical and poetical.

HITHERTO I have treated only of general characters of ſtyle, applicable to many different ſubjects; but I am now to conſider ſtyle as ſuited to particular ſubjects and occaſions. And I will begin with the firſt and moſt neceſſary uſe of language, *converſation*, which is either upon the ſubject of the common affairs of life, or upon matters of art and ſcience. This me-

Digitized by Google

thod of communication was, like every other, at firſt rude and artleſs; but, in proceſs of time, it was formed into a ſtyle.

This ſtyle is very different from almoſt every other kind of compoſition, and particularly from the rhetorical ſtyle, or the ſtyle of public ſpeaking; to which, indeed, it may be ſaid to be the juſt oppoſite, both in reſpect of the tone or pronunciation, and of the whole taſte and manner of the compoſition. And, as very few perſons have ſuch extent of genius as to excell in things altogether unlike or oppoſite, it ſeldom happens that thoſe, who have great talents for public ſpeaking, and practiſe it much, excell likewiſe in the ſtyle of private converſation; but by far the greater part of orators, when they enter a little ſeriouſly into converſation, fall into the tone of an oration. And, on the other hand, thoſe who ſpeak moſt agreeably in private converſation, when they attempt public ſpeaking, take it up in a tone much too low, and which may be called *prattle*, compared with what public ſpeaking ought to be. There have been, however, in our age,

Digitized by Google

and there are ſome ſtill living, who are exceptions to this rule; but they are few in number.

Negatively, therefore, this ſtyle may be defined not to be the ſtyle of public ſpeaking. But what is it poſitively? I ſay it is a ſtyle that, however much laboured it may be, ought to appear altogether unpremeditated: It ſhould, therefore, have no ſtudied ornaments; the words ſhould be common and ordinary, the compoſition plain and ſimple. Periods, therefore, ſhould be avoided in this ſtyle, as much as they are ſought for in an oration; and it ſhould not run out, even into long ſentences, with parentheſes, or any other figure, which tends to make the compoſition any wiſe perplexed or involved. It is not, however, without ornament belonging to it; for it admits of wit of every kind, which indeed is a more proper ornament of converſation than of more grave and ſerious compoſitions. But there ought not to be too much even of this ornament, otherwiſe it ceaſes to be ſimple and natural. This is the great fault of the dialogue in Congreve's comedies, which are

Digitized by Google

overlaid with wit; and, in general, it is the fault of moſt of our Engliſh comedies.

But the chief ornament of converſation is what I call the *ethic*, or the expreſſion of characters and manners, whether it be the ſpeaker's own character, or that of any other perſon; and here comes in humour, which every body allows to be one of the moſt pleaſant things in converſation. It is this that makes ſtory-telling agreeable, which, without this ſeaſoning, is commonly very diſagreeable. But, among people of faſhion, the humour ought not to be of the loweſt kind, nor deſcend to downright farce.

Theſe, I think, are the principal characters of this ſtyle; nor do I know that there is any material difference whether the ſubject of converſation be the ordinary occurrences of life, or matters of art and ſcience, except that, in the laſt caſe, there ſhould be more exactneſs and accuracy in the uſe of words. And there is one kind of wit, which is tolerable and even agree-

Digitized by Google

able, if not too frequent, in converſation upon ordinary ſubjects, but is not at all proper upon ſubjects of learning; I mean any kind of ambiguity or playing upon words. Neither is there much place for humour upon ſuch ſubjects.

To this ſtyle is nearly related the next that I ſhall mention, viz. the Epiſtolary; nor do I know any difference betwixt them, except that the ſtyle of the latter ſhould be more conciſe and compreſſed, and more cut into ſhort ſentences, or commas, as the antient critics call them; for the converſation-ſtyle admits of a greater flow, and more looſeneſs and prolixity of expreſſion. Of this kind is the letter of Lentulus, which I before quoted from Salluſt *, and Cicero's, and thoſe of other antients written in good taſte. It was this conciſeneſs and frugality of words, which, I believe, made Ariſtotle be reputed ſo good a letter-writer †; for that is the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of his ſtyle. As to the letters of Seneca, and

* Pag. 206.

† Demetrius Phalerius, Par. 239. περι ἑρμηνειας.

Digitized by Google

ſome of Pliny the younger, they ought not to be called letters, as not being written for private uſe, but for the public; and indeed they are altogether things of ſhow, and are rather epideictic orations, but in a bad taſte of compoſition, than familiar epiſtles. In this they have been imitated by many moderns, who, not knowing what regular form to give to their looſe disjointed thoughts, have thrown them together into a ſeries of letters, in which I obſerve ſome of the French writers have taken occaſion to ſhew their breeding and addreſs, by treating their imaginary correſpondents with moſt courtly *politeſſe*.

The next particular character of ſtyle I ſhall mention is the didactic, or the ſtyle of ſcience. This I diſtinguiſh into two kinds; the firſt coincides with the ſtyle of which I have already treated, viz. the ſtyle of converſation. For it is when ſcience is delivered by way of dialogue, the moſt antient way undoubtedly of teaching, or of ſearching and inveſtigating, and I am perſuaded the beſt. It appears to have been the only method practiſed in the moſt learned coun-

Digitized by Google

try, that, I believe, ever exiſted, I mean Egypt, and among the Pythagoreans, the moſt learned ſect of philoſophers that ever was in Greece. Socrates, as it is well known, uſed no other method of inſtruction *. And in this manner of delivering philoſophy, his ſcholar, Plato, copied him, and ſo ſucceſsfully, that his dialogues, ſo

* Every man who has any experience in teaching children (and all vulgar or uninſtructed men are more or leſs children,) muſt know, with great certainty, that it is the beſt: When a child hears any thing in a continued diſcourſe, he does not much mind it; but, if the queſtion is aſked, his attention is excited, and the anſwer is infixed in his memory, eſpecially if the teacher can, by proper introductory queſtions, contrive it ſo that it is made by himſelf; for then he ſeems to be his own teacher, and what he finds out in that way he conſiders as a diſcovery of his own, which he very ſeldom forgets. It is in this way that Plato, in the *Meno*, makes a ſlave of *Meno*'s ſolve a problem of geometry, about which many of thoſe who think themſelves pretty good geometers might at firſt blunder, as much as the ſlave did. And, not only in teaching did the antient Greek philoſophers uſe this method of queſtion and anſwer, but alſo in diſputation, and in the inveſtigation of any ſubject. This method was at laſt reduced into an art, and was called *dialectic*, from the Greek word διαλεγεσθαι, ſignifying to *converſe*; from whence the word διαλογος, and our own word *dialogue*.

Digitized by Google

far as they keep to the ſtyle of converſation, are maſter-pieces of the kind that never yet have been equalled, though often imitated. This is acknowledged by all the antient critics, and particularly by the Halicarnaſſian *, who in other reſpects is not a little ſevere upon Plato's ſtyle. This ſort of didactic writing admits of all the ornaments belonging to converſation upon matters of ſcience, and particularly the *ethic*, with which Plato's dialogues abound; and beſides, he has given them a fable, with various turns and incidents, and has really made them dramatic pieces, as I ſhall take occaſion to obſerve, when I come to ſpeak of poetry.

The other kind of didactic ſtyle is that by which any art or ſcience is delivered in continued diſcourſe or writing, without queſtion or anſwer, or introducing any perſonages to diſpute together. This method has been almoſt univerſally practiſed ever ſince the days of Ariſtotle, who appears to

* Epiſt. ad Pompeium, c. 2. where he contraſts this plain, and ſimple, and *unmade* ſtyle, as he calls it, with that kind of forced, or *made* ſtyle, which he ſometimes runs into.

Digitized by Google

me to have been among the firſt, at leaſt of the Socratic family, who uſed it. When it is perfect of the kind, it is of all others the moſt completely ſimple, ſo ſimple as hardly to deſerve the name of ſtyle or compoſition; nor has it any thing that can entitle it to that appellation, except order and method, and the moſt exact propriety of words. For it admits of no tropes or figures, either of ſingle words or of compoſition, nor of any the leaſt ſuperfluity of words, not even of words to explain or remove ambiguities: So that the only virtues of this ſtyle are brevity and perſpicuity. The moſt perfect model of this kind of writing is Euclid's Elements, in which there is not ſo much as a metaphorical word to be found from beginning to end; and all mathematical writings ſince his time have been of this kind. Ariſtotle's works of abſtruſe ſcience, ſuch as he calls his *Eſoteric* or *Acroamatic* works, which he never intended for the uſe of the people, are of the ſame kind. Theſe are his books of logic, his books of phyſics, entitled *De Phyſica Auſcultatione*, and his books of metaphyſics, in none of which is there, as far as I

Digitized by Google

can recollect, a ſingle metaphor to be found, unleſs perhaps ſome ſo common as to have eſcaped my obſervation.

But ſciences that do not admit of ſuch ſtrict demonſtration, and are of more popular uſe, will bear more ornament in the delivery, and, I think, are the better for ſome variety of expreſſion, and for explanation and illuſtration by metaphors, compariſons, and examples. The ſciences I mean are morals, government, criticiſm, and the popular arts of rhetoric and poetry. And accordingly, Ariſtotle, in his books upon thoſe ſubjects, which he intended for the uſe of the people, does not write in a ſtyle ſo dry and jejune, but, on the contrary, pleaſant, agreeable, and as much ornamented as he thought the ſtyle of a philoſopher ought to be. And Cicero goes ſo far as to ſay, ſpeaking, as I think he muſt be underſtood, of his popular writings, that his ſtyle was incredibly ſweet and copious*.

* Cic. Topica ad Trebatium, c. 1. where he ſays a thing which could hardly be believed, if we had not ſo good authority for it, namely, that Ariſtotle's writings were not at all known to the rhetoricians,

Digitized by Google

His works of this kind are his morals to Nicomachus; his books upon government, his three books on rhetoric, and his ſingle book on poetry, mutilated and imperfect as

and but to very few philoſophers. He adds, 'Quibus eo minus ignoſcendum eſt, quod non modo rebus iis, quæ ab illo dictæ et inventæ ſunt, allici debuerunt; ſed dicendi quoque incredibili quadam cum copia, tum etiam ſuavitate.' To thoſe, who are only converſant with Ariſtotle's works of abſtruſe philoſophy, this account of his ſtyle will appear very ſtrange; but, to prove that it is true of his popular writings, I will give but one inſtance, from his introduction to his Book of Poetry, which is as follows:—Περι ποιητικης αυτης τε και των ειδων αυτης, ηντινα δυναμιν εκαστον εχει, και πως δει συνιστασθαι τους μυθους, ει μελλοι καλως εξειν ἡ ποιησις, ἐτι δε εκ ποσων και ποιων εστι μοριων. ὁμοιως δε και περι των αλλων ὁσα της αὐτης ἐστι μεθοδου, λεγωμεν, ἀρξαμενοι κατα φυσιν, πρωτον ἀπο των πρωτων. 'This is a period of which the compoſition may be ſaid to be numerous and flowing. Of the ſame kind are the introductions to ſome even of his books of deep philoſophy. I have mentioned in the text his books of Metaphyſics; and I will add an example of a very good period, with which he begins one of his moſt abſtruſe works, and upon a moſt abſtruſe ſubject; I mean his books περι ψυχης. 'Των καλων και τιμιων την ειδησιν ὑπολαμβανοντες, μαλλον δ' ἑτεραν ἑτερας ἡ κατ' ακριβειαν, ἡ τῳ βελτιονων τε και θαυμασιωτερων ειναι, δι' αμφοτερα ταυτα την της ψυχης ἱστοριαν ευλογως αν εν πρωτοις τιθειημεν.'

Digitized by Google

it is. And, beſides theſe, there is the introduction to his Metaphyſics, which is written in a very agreeable ſtyle, and is, I think, a fine piece of compoſition.

There are two famous didactic poems, both excellent of the kind, but written in ſtyles very different; I mean Lucretius's poem *de rerum Natura*, and Virgil's Georgics. The firſt has hardly any ornament at all in the didactic part, and

——Si prius ordine verbum
Poſterius facias,——

perfect proſe, and mere philoſophy, tranſlated from the books of Epicurus and his followers. But, in his introduction, and the beginnings of his books, there is as fine poetry, and language as highly ornamented, as is to be found any where. Virgil, on the other hand, is ornamented throughout, not only in his Exordium, the beginnings of his other books, and his digreſſions, but likewiſe in the didactic part, where he delivers the precepts of the art. For proof of this we need go no farther than the firſt Geor-

Digitized by Google

gic, in which, after the propoſition of the ſubject, the invocation, and the fine compliment to Auguſtus, he enters upon his ſubject, by deſcribing the time when the huſbandman ſhould begin to plow in the ſpring, in the two following beautiful lines:

Verè novo gelidus canis cùm montibus humor
Liquitur, et zephyro putris ſe gleba reſolvit.

Then, in the next following, he deſcribes the operation of plowing as poetically as it is poſſible; for he paints it, and ſets it before our eyes:

Depreſſo incipiat jam tum mihi taurus aratro
Ingemere, et ſulco attritus ſplendeſcere vomer.

Here is not only true poetical deſcription, by the circumſtances of the thing, but great beauty of numbers, and that peculiar *artifice* of verſification which diſtinguiſhes Virgil's poetry from every other in Latin.

Lucretius, on the other hand, after a very pompous exordium, in as ſweet flowing verſe as ever was written, and after a fine compliment to his patron Memmius, begins his ſubject in this manner:

Digitized by Google

Principium hinc cujus nobis exordia sumet,
Nullam rem e nihilo gigni divinitus unquam.
Quippe ita formido mortales continet omnes,
Quod multa in terris fieri, cœloque tuentur,
Quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
Possunt; ac fieri divino numine rentur.
Quas ob res, ubi viderimus nihil posse creari
De nihilo; tum, quod sequimur, jam rectius inde
Perspiciemus; et unde queat res quæque creari,
Et quo quæque modo fiant opera sine divum.
Nam si de nihilo fierent, ex omnibus rebus
Omne genus nasci posset; nil semine egeret.

It is needless to quote more passages from the two poets; these are sufficient to shew their different style and manner. The question then is, which of the two is best? And, for my own part, I have no scruple to declare, that I think Lucretius's manner is more correct, and in better taste. For every work, whether in prose or verse, should perform in the best manner that which it promises. Now, both are didactic poems, professing the one to teach Epicurus's philosophy, and the other agriculture; and it is certain, that every art or science is better taught in plain simple language, where nothing is studied but propriety, than in a high figurative style, and

Digitized by Google

pompous artificial verſe. And, accordingly, there are many obſcurities and ambiguities in Virgil, though he treat of a ſubject much better known, and leſs difficult to be underſtood, than in Lucretius, who, as he tells us himſelf, had even a language to invent for expreſſing

——Graiorum obſcura reperta.

At the ſame time, I think, every poem ſhould be ornamented more or leſs, and that there ſhould be in it both fine language and fine verſification. Nor is either of theſe wanting in Lucretius. But the difference betwixt him and Virgil is, that he uſes them where they ſhould be; Virgil throughout, and where they ſhould not be.

I would not, however, have it thought that Virgil did not know,

Deſcriptas ſervare vices, operumque colores.

But he complied with the faſhion of the times, and made a poem more, I believe, to the taſte of Auguſtus and his court than to his own. For at that time there was

Digitized by Google

beginning in Rome a magnificence, and a kind of luxury of taſte, which at laſt corrupted not only painting, as Pliny tells us*, but all the arts. And I not only praiſe the correctneſs of taſte of Horace, but his manly firmneſs and reſolution, in daring to write his ſatires and epiſtles in a ſtyle very ſuitable, indeed, to the ſubject, but I am perſuaded not agreeable to the taſte of Auguſtus, or of his patron Mecænas. The ſame complaiſance to the taſte of the times very probably made Dr. Armſtrong, in his admirable poem upon health, imitate Virgil rather than Lucretius. For, had he delivered his precepts for preſerving health in the ſame plain language and artleſs numbers that Lucretius has uſed in delivering his doctrines of philoſophy, no body would have read him.—And ſo much for the didactic ſtyle.

* Pliny, Nat. Hiſt. Horace ſays the ſame of the theatrical muſic among the Romans; where, ſpeaking of its antient ſimplicity, and the refinements that had been made upon it in later times, he ſays,

Sic priſcæ motumque et luxuriem addidet arti
Tibicen, traxitque vagus per pulpita veſtem.
Ars Poet. v. 214.

Digitized by Google

The next ſtyle I ſhall mention is the hiſtorical. This ſtyle, in antient times, conſiſted of two parts, the narrative and the rhetorical; I mean the ſpeeches; for as all public buſineſs was in thoſe days carried on by ſpeaking, an hiſtorian could not have given a full account of public tranſactions, without inſerting ſpeeches into his hiſtory, as well as facts and events. And accordingly Thucydides tells us, that the many ſpeeches which he has inſerted in his hiſtory were all actually ſpoken, at leaſt in ſubſtance *. And beſides, ſuppoſing the ſpeeches to be feigned, as they muſt have been, if the author lived at any diſtance of time from the actions related, it was the propereſt way of giving an account of the motives of councils and actions, and of diſputing any queſtion about what was juſt or unjuſt, honourable or diſhonourable, uſeful or the contrary. All this muſt be done in hiſtories without ſpeeches, by letting the ſtory ſtand ſtill to make long reflections, which *ſtick out*, as it were, and make, properly ſpeaking, no part of the work. To theſe two parts Herodotus has added a

* Lib. I. in proëmio.

Digitized by Google

third, viz. Dialogue, and, by conſequence, the imitation of characters and manners, or, as I call it, the *Ethic*, which makes his hiſtory, as the Halicarnaſſian obſerves *, as beautiful and pleaſant to read as any poem. And this is one reaſon, beſides the ignorance of antient cuſtoms and manners, that makes the modern reader, not acquainted with this art of writing hiſtory, believe the ſtories in Herodotus to be no better than poetical fictions.

Our modern hiſtorians, therefore, by leaving out not only dialogue but ſpeeches, have eaſed themſelves of very near one half of the labour which the antient hiſtorians beſtowed upon their works. And I believe it is well, both for their reputation and their eaſe, that they do ſo; for the moſt of them, if they had been obliged to make ſpeeches (not to mention the dialogue of Herodotus) ſuch as thoſe of Thucydides, Salluſt, Livy, or even Herodotus, though he has not many of them, would, I am afraid, not have added to their reputation. But if they do not ſhew their rhetoric in ſpeeches, they

* De Thucyd. Judicium, c. 23.

Digitized by Google

have enough of it, and, I think, more than enough, in their narrative. For the narrative of an hiſtorian ought, in my apprehenſion, to be plain and ſimple, at leaſt not rhetorical, nor adapted to move the paſſions, or inflame the imagination by epithets, with which we ſee the ſtyle of modern hiſtory is loaded, or by deſcriptions ſo particular as to be poetical painting, many of which we ſee in ſome hiſtories that have a great vogue among us. Such a manner of writing hiſtory makes an intelligent reader ſuſpect that it is little better than a novel; and, if he has curioſity enough to look into the original authors and records from which it ſhould have been compiled, he will, I believe, in moſt caſes, find that this ſuſpicion is not ill founded; and he will have this further ſatisfaction for his trouble, that, by reading but one of the beſt of thoſe original authors, he will learn more of the facts, and, what is of greater conſequence, more of the manners and opinions of the age, than by reading twenty compilements.

I would therefore adviſe our compilers of hiſtory, if they will not ſtudy the models

Digitized by Google

of the hiſtoric ſtyle which the antients have left us, at leaſt to imitate the ſimplicity of Dean Swift's ſtyle in his Gulliver's Travels, and to endeavour to give as much the appearance of credibility to what truth they relate as he has given to his monſtrous fictions; not that I would be underſtood to recommend the ſtyle of thoſe travels as a pattern for hiſtory, for which it never was intended, being indeed an excellent imitation of the narrative of a ſailor, but wanting that gravity, dignity, and ornament which the hiſtorical ſtyle requires. For the ſubject being the great affairs of a nation, the ſtyle ought to be ſuitable. The words, therefore, ſhould be well choſen, and the beſt in common uſe, and they ſhould be put together with an agreeable compoſition. For hiſtory ought not to be written in ſhort detached ſentences, after the manner of Salluſt or Tacitus; neither ſhould it be rounded or conſtricted into periods like thoſe of an oration; but the compoſition ſhould be looſer, and of a more eaſy and natural flow*.

* This is the deſcription given by Demetrius Phalerius, περὶ ἑρμηνείας, of the hiſtorical period, which he places in the middle betwixt the rhetorical and that of dialogue, not being ſo conſtricted (συνεσταμένη) as the one, nor ſo looſe as the other.

Digitized by Google

Theſe are the rules laid down by antient critics, by which they tell us, the ſtyle of hiſtorical narrative ſhould be framed; for, as to the ſpeeches, they belong to a different kind of compoſition, viz. the rhetorical; and there are no other rules at this day, ſo far as I know, by which we can judge of the ſtyle of hiſtory. If, therefore, we find a hiſtory, of which the ſtyle is loaded with metaphors and epithets, embelliſhed with poetical deſcriptions, the compoſition either too much rounded into periods, or altogether diſjointed and unconnected, whatever praiſe or reputation ſuch hiſtories may acquire, we are ſure they are not according to the claſſical ſtandard.

The only two particular characters of ſtyle, that remain to be treated of, are the rhetorical and the poetical; but, for this, the proper time will be when I come to treat of rhetoric and poetry.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XX.

General obſervations—Compoſition an art as well as language—The Greeks our maſters both in that art and the other fine arts, ſuch as ſculpture—The Romans likewiſe our maſters, but at ſecond-hand—Only to be imitated in ſo far as they themſelves imitated the Greeks—Praiſe of the ſtyle of Horace—Julius Cæſar—Cicero—Upon the revival of letters, the Greek writers moſt ſtudied and imitated, particularly in England.

IN the preceding chapters, I have endeavoured to explain all the various immutations of ſingle words, in reſpect both of ſound and ſenſe. I have alſo ſhewn the ſeveral changes they undergo by compoſition in both theſe reſpects. Theſe I call the materials of which ſtyle is made; and, according to the uſe that is made of theſe materials, ſtyle aſſumes certain characters, general or particular, which I have alſo endeavoured to explain. The following chapters will contain ſome obſervations, which,

Digitized by Google

I think, naturally ariſe from what has gone before.

And the firſt thing to be conſidered is, whether I have not made a great deal too much of this art in compoſition, as well as of the art of language, and whether there be really any art at all in it? This would have appeared a ſtrange doubt in antient times; but certain geniuſes have ariſen of late among us, who think they ſtand in no need of learning to aſſiſt their natural parts, and who, being conſcious that they have never learned either the grammatical art, or that of compoſition, with any degree of accuracy, are willing to believe that there is no art of either; or, if there be arts of both, that, as theſe were formed without art, and have grown up from mere uſe and practice, they may be learned in the ſame way. But I hope I have ſaid enough, in this and the preceding volume, to convince every intelligent reader that there is an art both of language and of ſtyle. That theſe arts, though they muſt at firſt have ariſen, like all other arts liberal and mechani-

Digitized by Google

cal, from rude experience and obſervation merely, never could have been formed into arts, or practiſed to any degree of perfection, except by men of ſuperior genius and underſtanding; and not even by them, but after a long courſe of time, and a ſucceſſion of ages of practice and obſervation. That the art being thus formed, and models for the practice exhibited, ſuch models may be imitated even by thoſe who are ignorant of the art, but not perfectly, nor without great hazard of error; and that thoſe only can perform beſt, and judge moſt truly of the performance of others, who have both learned the rules of the art, and formed their taſte upon the ſtudy of the beſt models in that art; but that thoſe who have done neither muſt be wretched performers and very bad critics. If this be true, and I think nobody can doubt of it, whoſe vanity is not concerned to maintain the contrary, it behoves all thoſe who deſire to excel in ſpeaking or writing, or even to be good judges of thoſe arts, to apply to the beſt maſters, and to ferm their taſte upon the beſt models.

Digitized by Google

The only queſtion then is, who thoſe beſt maſters are, and where the beſt models are to be found? In ſome other arts, ſuch as ſculpture and architecture, that is no queſtion; for the antients there are acknowledged maſters. Nor will any man be allowed to have a finiſhed taſte in thoſe arts, much leſs to be an able performer, if he has not carefully ſtudied the antient remains of them that are preſerved. Now, it is a fact moſt certain, that, both in Athens and Rome, the art of ſpeaking, which, as I have ſaid, is the principal and parent art *, was much more ſtudied than either of the other two. And there was a very good reaſon why it ſhould be more cultivated than any of thoſe *mute arts*, as they were called, becauſe, without eloquence, no man could riſe to any eminence in the ſtate; and even his life and fortune very often depended upon his talent of ſpeaking; ſo that every motive of glory, ambition, and even ſafety, prompted an Athenian or a Roman to apply to the ſtudy of eloquence; whereas a great ſculptor, painter, or architect could expect nothing from excelling in thoſe arts, but

* Page 2.

Digitized by Google

the reputation of a good artiſt, and he could fear nothing from not ſucceeding in them. If, therefore, the antients did not excel in an art which they practiſed ſo much, and to the ſtudy of which they had ſuch incitements, and with the advantage too of a language ſo fitted, in every reſpect, for fine compoſition, it muſt have been great want of genius. And if we, on the other hand, with much leſs practice of the art, and much leſs incitement to the ſtudy of it, and under the diſadvantages of a harſh unmuſical language, have nevertheleſs excelled them in eloquence and fine writing, we muſt have a great ſuperiority of genius; for that we exceed them in induſtry and application, or that we have greater advantages of education, will hardly, I think, be maintained. Now, that there is ſuch a diſparity of genius betwixt us and them, no man of ſenſe will believe. And, if ſo, the concluſion ſeems to be, that, as there is an art of ſtyle and compoſition, we muſt go to the antient maſters to learn the rules of it; and we muſt ſtudy and imitate the patterns for the practice of it which they have left behind them.

Digitized by Google

But, of the antients, who are to be our maſters, the Greeks or the Romans? That is aſking, in other words, whether we are to chuſe for our maſters thoſe who were ſcholars themſelves, or their maſters? And here the parallel will likewiſe hold betwixt the two arts above-mentioned, particularly the art of ſculpture, and this art of compoſition. For, though the Romans had ſtatuaries as well as writers, who no doubt likewiſe formed themſelves by imitation of the Greek models, it is allowed by all the connoiſſeurs, that none of the ſtatues which they have produced can bear a compariſon with the Greek; and a judge in that art can immediately diſtinguiſh the Greek ſtatue, by a certain ſymmetry, elegance, and grace, which do not belong to the Roman.

But, of the Greek maſters, whom are we to prefer, the more antient, or the later writers? This queſtion Horace has determined; for he has told us*, that the moſt

* Quia Graiorum ſunt antiquiſſima quæque
Scripta vel optima.

Lib. 2. Epiſt. 1. v. 28.

Digitized by Google

antient are the beſt. And this is undoubtedly true with reſpect to poetry, of which he is ſpeaking; for Homer is certainly the beſt, as well as the oldeſt poet. And, tho' all the later poets have imitated him, none have equalled, much leſs exceeded him. By this I would not be underſtood to mean, nor was it, I am perſuaded, Horace's meaning, that there were no poets in Greece before Homer (for that, I think, by the nature of things, was impoſſible); but that there were none before him whoſe poems were thought worth preſerving. And it is in the ſame ſenſe that Herodotus is the oldeſt, and, in my opinion, the beſt, of the Greek hiſtorians. Demoſthenes, however, we muſt admit, is an exception from this rule; the reaſon of which is, that there was in his time a greater ſcope, and finer field for eloquence, than ever there had been at any time before in Greece. For it is only great occaſions that call forth and produce great men in every art. And it was for the ſame reaſon that, in Rome, before the age of Cicero, there was no orator ſo great as he. But, if Demoſthenes be not the oldeſt, he is the lateſt great orator of Greece; and, as I have obſerved elſewhere, all good writing after his

Digitized by Google

time was no more than imitation *. For then the ſtandard of beauty in eloquence, and every kind of compoſition, was fixed, as well as in the other fine arts. And here likewiſe the compariſon will hold betwixt

* After Demoſthenes, or after the death of Alexander the Great, whom Demoſthenes ſurvived but a ſhort time, eloquence, as the Halicarnaſſian tells us, *de Oratoribus antiquis, in initio*, began to decline; and Cicero ſays the ſame thing, in his book *de Clar. Oratoribus*, c. 9. where he tells us, that, after Demoſthenes, Hyperides, Æſchines, Lycurgus, Dinarchus, and Demades, who all lived much about the ſame time, a bad taſte of ſpeaking began to be introduced; and he names the man who firſt corrupted what he calls 'Succus ille et ſanguis incorruptus 'eloquentiæ, in qua naturalis ineſſet, non fucatus 'nitor.' This was Demetrius Phalereus, the ſcholar of the philoſopher Theophraſtus, who had been trained up, not in the Forum, or in real buſineſs, but philoſophical diſputations. 'Hic primus inflexit 'orationem,' ſays our author, 'et eam mollem tene-'ramque reddidit; et ſuavis, ſicut fuit, videri ma-'luit, quàm gravis; ſed ſuavitate eâ, quâ perfunde-'ret animos, non quâ perfringeret; et tantum ut 'memoriam concinnitatis ſuæ, non (quemadmodum 'de Pericle ſcripſit Eupolis,) cum delectatione aculeos 'etiam relinqueret in animis eorum, a quibus eſſet

Digitized by Google

ſtatuary and the writing art. For thoſe ſtatues that we now admire as the models of perfection, are in all probability no more

'auditus.' This corruption of eloquence, thus begun, went on ſo faſt, that, as the Halicarnaſſian informs us, *dicto loco*, about his time a good taſte in ſpeaking was almoſt wholly extinguiſhed; and, in place of the true Attic, and philoſophical eloquence, as he calls it, a barbarous kind of it ſucceeded from Aſia, Phrygia, or Caria—loud and impudent, without philoſophy, or the aſſiſtance of any good learning. And in this way things continued till, by the patronage of ſome great men in Rome, a better taſte began to revive. And how was this better taſte reſtored? It was by the imitation of the great orators above-mentioned; and, in general, of all the great writers of antient Greece. This is evident from the writings of the Halicarnaſſian, who was himſelf one of the great reſtorers of this better taſte, under the protection of ſome of theſe great men at Rome, with whom, it appears, he was connected. He wrote three books upon the ſubject of imitation, which are now loſt; but they are mentioned in his letter to Pompey, c. 3. And, from the whole tenor of his critical writings, it is evident, he thought that a good ſtyle could no otherwiſe be formed than by the imitation of the great writers in the flouriſhing days of Greece. And, accordingly, he himſelf has in that way formed a ſtyle, which is, in my opinion, as I have elſewhere obſerved, the beſt that has been written ſince fine ſpeaking and writing ceaſed to be living arts.

Digitized by Google

than copies of more antient ſtatues, the work of artiſts who lived at or before the time of Demoſthenes. This, at leaſt, we are ſure was the caſe of the Venus de Me-

It may be obſerved, from the letter above-mentioned to Pompey, c. 2. that he not only wrote to Pompey, but that Pompey correſponded with him upon ſubjects of literature. He has given us two quotations from a letter of Pompey's to him, which ſhew, both the great regard that Pompey had to his judgment, in matter of ſtyle and compoſition, and how good a judge he himſelf was in that matter, as well as a very elegant writer, even in Greek, in which language, it appears, he correſponded with the Halicarnaſſian. I take notice of this the rather, becauſe, I think, juſtice has not been done to this great man's character, with regard to his learning and taſte. And, as this is the only monument of the kind, as far as I know, remaining of this great man, the learned reader will not be diſpleaſed to read it here. The ſubject of Pompey's letter is the defence of Plato againſt the Halicarnaſſian's cenſure of his high ſtyle. The firſt quotation is in theſe words:—'Εν μεν γαρ τοις ἑτεροις σχημασι ῥᾳδιον πεσεῖν μεσον τι επαινου και μεμψεως· εν δε τῇ κατασκευῃ, το μη επιτευχθεν, παντῃ αποτυγχανεται. διο μοι δόκει τουτους τους ανδρας ουκ εκ των επικινδυνοτατων, ουδε ελασσονων, αλλ' εκ των πλειστων και ευτυχηθεντων εξεταζειν.' The ſecond quotation is as follows:—'Εγω δε, καιπερ εχων απολογησασθαι ὑπερ ἁπαντων ἠ των γε πλειστων, ου τολμῶ σοι εναντια λεγειν. ἐν δε τοῦτο διισχυριζομαι, ὁτι ουκ εστι μεγαλων επιτυχεῖν εν ουδενὶ τροπῳ, μη τοιαυτὰ

dicis, which was no more than a copy of the ſtatue of that goddeſs in her temple in Cnidus, made by one Diomedes an Athenian, as the inſcription upon the pedeſtal of the ſtatue at Florence bears. The original was the work of Praxitiles; and, as it is deſcribed by Lucian in his Imagines, cap. 6. and his Amores, cap. 13. it had a beauty which the copier has not endeavoured to imitate, nor, ſo far as I know, any later Greek ſtatuary. The beauty I mean is the imitation of the eyes, which were repreſented as moiſt, and expreſſing ſomething chearful and gracious. The head, I know, of the Medicean ſtatue is thought by ſome connoiſſeurs not to be antient, but a modern addition, ſuch as we know has been made to many antient ſtatues. But, ſuppoſe this to be the caſe, I am

τολμῶντα και παραβαλλομενον, εν οἱς και σφαλλεσθαι εστιν ἀναγκαιοιν.' This is ſaid by the Halicarnaſſian to be ἐπιστολη ἐυπαιδευτος, and, I think, without the leaſt flattery; for it is admirable, both for the matter and the ſtyle, being a moſt ſenſible piece of criticiſm, and in as good words, and as elegant compoſition, as the Halicarnaſſian himſelf could have uſed.

Digitized by Google

perſuaded the original head made by Diomedes had no ſuch expreſſion; and indeed we have hardly a conception how any ſuch can be given to marble.

But, though I thus prefer the Greek writers of every kind to the Roman, I would not have it believed that I think meanly of the latter, ſome of whom were excellent imitators, and thoſe that imitated moſt wrote beſt. Of this number is Horace, who certainly took to himſelf the advice he gives to the *Piſones*.

——— Vos exemplaria Græca
Nocturna verſate manu, verſate diurna.

And he profeſſes his admiration of the Greek genius and eloquence in the following paſſage, where he contraſts the manners of the Greeks with thoſe of his own countrymen, and in that way accounts why they neither did nor could rival them in the fine arts.

Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo
Muſa loqui, præter laudem, nullius avaris.
Romani pueri longis rationibus aſſem

Digitized by Google

Diſcunt in partes centum diducere. Dicat
Filius Albini, ſi de quincunce remota eſt
Uncia, quid ſuperet? Poteras dixiſſe, Triens? Eu!
Rem poteris ſervare tuam. Redit uncia: quid fit?
Semis. An hæc animos ærugo et cura peculi
Cùm ſemel imbuerit, ſperamus carmina fingi
Poſſe linenda cedro, et levi ſervanda cupreſſo?
Ars Poet. v. 323.

How far this account which Horace gives of the genius and character of the Romans in his time is applicable to our times, and whether the *cura et ærugo peculi* be not as great an enemy to fine writing, and all the fine arts, among us, as among them, I am not at preſent to inquire. But it belongs to our ſubject to obſerve, that Horace, in conſequence of this admiration and imitation of the Greek maſters, is, in my opinion, the moſt perfect of all the Roman writers in every kind of writing that he has attempted. For the ſchools of declamation were beginning, about this time in Rome, to infect the ſtyle of all kinds of writing; and I have ventured to affirm, that even Virgil has not entirely eſcaped the infection*.

* See what I have before ſaid upon this ſubject, p. 260, et ſeq.

Digitized by Google

Theſe ſchools, in the ſucceeding age, intirely corrupted the taſte, and produced a Seneca, a Tacitus, and a Pliny the younger*.

Another great writer among the Romans was Julius Cæſar; great in letters and eloquence, as well as in arms. He ſpoke with the ſame ſpirit, ſays Quinctilian, with which he fought; and, if any of his orations had come down to us, I believe we ſhould have admired thoſe of Cicero leſs. Thus much, at leaſt, is certain, that his Commentaries, the only work of his that remains, are moſt perfect of the kind: They are no more than memoirs, which, as we are told, he intended only as materials for hiſtory, not having time to give them the ornament and dreſs which hiſtory requires. But, in the opinion, not only of his friend Hirtius, but of Cicero, who had certainly no partiality for him, they were ſo elegantly and ſo well written in every reſpect, as to diſcourage even the ableſt writers from attempting to give more orna-

* See what I have further ſaid upon this ſubject in the paſſage above quoted.

Digitized by Google

ment to the ſubject *. Indeed, it is ſurpriſing with what a perſpicuous brevity, very different from the obſcure and affected brevity of Tacitus, and with what perfect ſimplicity of ſtyle, he has recorded the greateſt military operations that are any where to be found in the hiſtory of mankind †.

But the greateſt proſe-writer among the Romans, both for the value and number of

* 'Hirtius, in præfatione ad librum octavum de 'bello Gallico. Cicero, de claris oratoribus, cap. 75.' Hirtius ſays, that he more than others muſt admire thoſe commentaries, becauſe others only know how correctly and well they are written, but he knew how eaſily and quickly.

† It is, I think, entertaining to read the deſcriptions of our modern battles (which, with all their noiſe and ſmoke, compared with thoſe of Julius, are little better than the battles of cranes and pigmies, or of frogs and mice); and to read at the ſame time Cæſar's account of his battles, which were truly heroic battles, like thoſe that Homer deſcribes.

——ὁτε δὴ ῥ' ἐς χῶρον ἐναξυνιόντες ἐκοντο,
Συν ῥ' ἴσαλον ῥινὲς, σὺν δ' εἶχεα, καὶ μένε ἀνδρῶν
Χαλκεοθωρήκων· ἀτὰρ ἀσπιδες ὀμφαλόεσσαι
Ἔπληντ' ἀλλήλῃσι, πολὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ὀρώρει.

Iliad iv. L. 456.

Digitized by Google

his works, is Cicero. In his critical and philoſophical works, the ſtyle is moſt beautiful; and his letters are perfect models of epiſtolary writing. As to his orations, I have preſumed to criticiſe pretty ſeverely the ſtyle of them, in which I have done no more than follow the judgment of the beſt critics of the time in which he lived, and ſome of them too his own particular friends, ſuch as Brutus, who deſiderated in him the *Succus et ſanguis incorruptus*, to uſe Cicero's own words, of the Attic eloquence;

Such was his firſt battle with the Helvetii, where he ſent away his own horſe, and the horſes of all his officers, that the danger might be equal to them all, which he judged to be ſo great, that he would not venture in any of his three lines of battle two new-levied legions, but poſted them with the auxiliaries upon the top of the hill, quite out of the reach of the enemy. The battle, he ſays, continued from morning to night, during all which time *no man ſaw the back of an enemy*. A mere modern reader would think this very flat, and expect that a great deal more would have been ſaid of ſo obſtinate a battle, that had laſted ſo long. And indeed if we could ſuppoſe, in modern times, bodies and ſpirits of men, arms and diſcipline fit for ſuch a conflict, what exaggeration would there not be in the deſcription of it! How would the ſtyle be loaded with epithets, ſuch as heroic valour—unparalleled courage—irreſiſtible fury, &c. &c.

Digitized by Google

and there is certainly ſomething too florid, and what may be called bloated, in the ſtyle of his orations, when compared with that of Demoſthenes, Lyſias, or any other of the great orators of Athens. But, ſuch as they are, they are very much better than the beſt after his time. To be convinced of this, we need only compare his encomium upon Julius Cæſar, pronounced in the ſenate upon occaſion of that conqueror pardoning Marcus Marcellus, with Pliny's panegyric upon the Emperor Trajan, the moſt perfect thing of the rhetorical kind in later times. In the one we find a copious flowing eloquence, which fills the mind no leſs than the ears; and, in the other, but a ſcanty ſenſe, frittered into little terſe ſentences, acute enough, but without gravity or weight. It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that he would have done better, if he had ſtuck cloſer to his Greek maſters, and continued, as he began, to tranſlate from Demoſthenes, inſtead of practiſing ſo much on fictitious ſubjects in the ſchools of declamation. This, indeed, gave him a copiouſneſs in ſpeaking; but,

Digitized by Google

at the ſame time, a redundancy and diffluence, to uſe a metaphor of his own, which pleaſed the people more than it did good judges *.

To conclude this criticiſm upon the Roman authors, as far as they imitated the Greeks, ſo far, and no farther, they ſucceeded. Salluſt was the firſt, as I have already obſerved, who ventured to neglect that ſtandard, and to ſtrike out a new ſtyle of hiſtory

* That ſuch was Cicero's ſtyle in his younger days before he went to Rhodes, is confeſſed by Cicero himſelf; for, ſpeaking of his Greek maſter at Rhodes, Molo, he ſays, 'Is dedit operam, ſi modo id conſequi 'potuit, ut nimis redundantes nos, et ſuperfluentes 'juvenili quâdam dicendi impunitate et licentiâ, re-'primeret, et quaſi extra ripas diffluentes coërceret.' Here the reader will obſerve, that he very modeſtly ſays, *ſi modo id conſequi potuit*. Now the ſevere critics in Rome thought that he had not accompliſhed it, nor is it likely that, in ſo ſhort a time as he was at Rhodes, he would be able to alter, altogether, a manner already formed; but by the people he was exceedingly admired, and, perhaps, more admired than if he had been more chaſte and correct; for it was the people of Rome that admired him, not the people that admired Demoſthenes. And to them we may apply the French proverb, 'Aux gens de village trompettes de bois.'

Digitized by Google

peculiar to himſelf. Tacitus endeavoured to improve upon the pattern he had ſet, but made it much worſe, becauſe ſtill farther removed from the Greek ſtandard; and ſo things went on from bad to worſe, till at laſt the taſte of writing, as well as of every other art, became quite barbarous.

Upon the revival of letters, the firſt ſcholars in Europe, and particularly in England, formed their ſtyle, as the beſt Roman authors did, upon the model of the Greek writers; for they did not imitate thoſe who were no more than imitators themſelves, but went to the fountain-head, without following the rivulets which the Latins had from thence derived. Among the firſt of theſe ſcholars was Chancellor More, whoſe judgment, preferring the Greek to the Roman writers, I have elſewhere quoted; and there can be no doubt that it was not his opinion ſingly, but that of all the learned of his age. Milton's ſtyle may be ſaid to be as much Greek as it is poſſible to make Engliſh; and even his Latin ſtyle appears to me to have been formed, not from the

Digitized by Google

imitation of any Roman writer, but by the ſtandard of the Greek, as the Romans themſelves wrote. Roger Aſcham, who lived a generation before, and was an excellent Greek and Latin ſcholar, has no doubt in this matter; and I will here tranſcribe what he ſays upon the ſubject. After having enumerated all the great authors that the ſingle city of Athens had produced in philoſophy, eloquence, hiſtory, and poetry, he adds, 'Now let Italian, and Latin itſelf, 'Spaniſh, French, Dutch, and Engliſh, 'bring forth their learning, and recite their 'authors, Cicero only excepted, and one or 'two more in Latin, they be all patched up 'clouts and rags, in compariſon of fair 'woven broad cloths; and truly, if there 'be any good in them, it is either learned, 'borrowed, or ſtolen, from ſome of thoſe 'worthy wits of Athens *.'

* P. 235. of Aſcham's Engliſh works, publiſhed at London 1771. This Roger Aſcham was preceptor to Queen Elizabeth, and taught her Greek and Latin. He relates, p. 272. that for a year or two ſhe employed herſelf conſtantly every forenoon in *double tranſlating*, as he calls it, of Demoſthenes and Iſocrates, and of

Digitized by Google

The Greek writers, therefore, muſt be acknowledged to be the ſtandards for good writing, as much as their ſtatues are for good ſtatuary or painting. If, however, the young ſtudent will not give himſelf the trouble neceſſary to attain ſuch a knowledge of th

ſome part of Tully in the afternoon; by which he means, firſt tranſlating from the Greek or Latin into Engliſh, and then from the Engliſh back again into Greek or Latin; by which means, he ſays, that ſhe attained to ſuch a perfect knowledge of both languages, that there were few in both the univerſities, or elſewhere in England, to be, in that reſpect, compared with her. And, in another place, p. 222. he relates, that when he went to take leave of Lady Jane Gray, before his journey to Germany, he found her in her chamber reading the Phædo of Plato in Greek, 'and 'with as much delight as ſome gentlemen would read a 'merry tale in Boccace, while her parents, the duke 'and the ducheſs, with all their houſhold, gentlemen 'and gentlewomen, were hunting in the park.' And of this lady he ſays further, in a letter to a friend of his, one Sturmius a German, 'Hâc ſuperiore æſtate, 'cum amicos meos in agro Eboracenſi viſerem, et 'inde literis Johannis Checi in aulam, ut huc profi-'cifcerem accitus ſum, in via deflexi Leiceſtriam, 'ubi Jana Graja cum patre habitaret. Statim ad-'miſſus ſum in cubiculum: inveni nobilem puel-'lam, Dii boni! legentem Græcè Phaedonem, 'quem ſic intelligit, ut mihi ipſi ſummam admira-'tionem injiceret. Sic loquitur et ſcribit Græcè, 'ut vera referenti vix fides adhiberi poſſit. Nacta

Digitized by Google

Greek, as to enable him to read with eaſe and delight the Greek authors, there are Latin, ſuch as thoſe I have mentioned above, that are not unworthy of imitation; particularly, I recommend Cicero, as the

'eſt præceptorem Joannem Elinarum, utriuſque linguæ 'valde peritum; propter humanitatem, prudentiam, 'uſum, rectam religionem, et alia multa rectiſſimæ 'amicitiæ vincula, mihi conjunctiſſimum.' The young King Edward VI. who had Sir John Cheke for his preceptor, was alſo very learned, and, as Aſcham ſays, p. 241. 'Had he lived a little longer, his 'only example had bred ſuch a race of worthy learn-'ed gentlemen as this realm never did yet afford.' And, in the ſame paſſage, he mentions 'two noble 'primroſes of nobility, the young Duke of Suffolk and 'Lord Henry Matravers, who were ſuch two examples 'to the court for learning as our time may rather wiſh 'than look for again.'

If, therefore, the antient learning be, as I ſuppoſe, the only true learning, that age was certainly a more learned age than this. It does not belong to my ſubject, as I have ſaid, to compare it in other reſpects with the preſent; but thus much I hope I may ſay without offence, that, if our kings and queens were educated as Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth were, and if our people of faſhion employed their leiſure-hours, as Lady Jane Gray did, and the other perſons of diſtinction mentioned by Aſcham, neither our public nor private affairs would go the worſe for it.

Digitized by Google

moſt copious and elegant, if not the moſt correct of them all. His works I would adviſe ſuch a ſtudent to ſtudy day and night, as Horace adviſed the Piſones to ſtudy the Greek maſters. And I know no better introduction to the reading of Cicero than his life, written by Dr. Middleton, who has ſhewn an excellent example, both of tranſlating and imitating.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XXI.

The neceſſity of forming a ſtyle by imitation—The Greek authors the beſt models for imitation—Next to them the Latin—Who next to the Greek and Latin?—Not the writings of the French Beaux Eſprits *of this age—Examination of thoſe French writers, both as to their matter and ſtyle—The imitation of our own authors, who have formed themſelves upon the antient models, is beſt, next to the imitation of the Greek and Latin.*

IT may ſeem ſtrange, but it is not more ſtrange than true, that every author, however original he may think himſelf, or be thought by others, in point of ſtyle and compoſition, is no better than an imitator. The caſe truly is, that either there is ſome author whom we admire, and propoſe to ourſelves as a model, which I believe generally happens, or we take in-

Digitized by Google

ſenſibly, and without knowing it, after the ſtyle and manner of thoſe with whom we converſe, or of the books which we read; and the utmoſt that invention has ever done in this matter, is either to improve or heighten one ſtyle that has been formerly uſed, or to mix different ſtyles together, and temper the one with the other. It is therefore of the utmoſt importance to every man who would form a good ſtyle, to be very careful in the choice of the authors whom he reads, or whoſe ſtyle he would chuſe to imitate. And we have ſeen an example of an author who certainly had genius (I mean Tacitus), and would have written well, if, inſtead of imitating Salluſt and the ſchools of declamation, he had choſen for his model ſome of the great authors of Greece. It was in this way, as I have elſewhere obſerved, that Dionyſius the Halicarnaſſian formed ſo excellent a ſtyle; and, by the ſame means, in later times than thoſe of Tacitus, Lucian wrote in a manner of which Athens needed not to have been aſhamed, when in the height of its glory for arts and learning.

Digitized by Google

Since, therefore, we muſt of neceſſity imitate, the only queſtion is, whom ſhall we imitate? And, according to my judgment, the Greeks ought to be our maſters in the writing art, no leſs than in ſculpture and painting. Next to them are their imitators, the Latin writers. But, ſuppoſe a man underſtands neither Greek nor Latin, and yet will write, who then ſhall be his model? Shall it be the Italian authors, the French, or ſome of our own? For as to the Swediſh and German authors, I believe nobody will propoſe them as patterns of ſtyle.

As to the Italians, there was a time in England when the authors of that nation were very much in faſhion. And it appears evidently, that even the great Milton has ſtudied and imitated them a good deal. And, indeed, if we are to forſake the antient models, I do not know that we can chuſe better. For, not only ſome of the old Italian authors are excellent writers, but it appears to me, from ſome things which I have ſeen lately come from that country, that the taſte of good writing is ſtill preſerved there, as well as of ſculpture and painting. But thoſe authors,

Digitized by Google

however excellent, are ſo much out of faſhion at preſent, that, I believe, no man in Britain imitates them as ſtandards of good writing.

The queſtion, therefore, lies altogether betwixt French and Engliſh authors. And, as many now-a-days think the French writers better ſtandards than even the Greek and Latin, and ſome of our moſt faſhionable authors have imitated them, even ſo far as to adopt the idioms of their language, it is, I think, worth the while to examine their pretenſions, and inquire, at ſome length, whether we ought, for them, to give up the antient authors, or even our own.

And, in the entry of this inquiry, it is proper to obſerve, that it is not of the French writers of the laſt age that I ſpeak, nor of all of this. I think I know myſelf ſome writers at preſent in France, who are men of ſenſe and modeſty as well as of ſcience, and who write ſenſibly and ſoberly. We muſt admit, that, in this age, natural knowledge and the diſcovery of this our earth owes a great deal to the labours of the

Digitized by Google

learned of France; and, in former ages, it cannot be denied, that they contributed very much to the reſtoration of learning, and particularly of Greek learning. But the writers I ſpeak of are late writers, diſtinguiſhed in their own country by the name of *Beaux Eſprits*, from the *ſçavans* or learned of the nation. Theſe gentlemen know little or nothing of the antient learning, nor indeed of any good learning of any kind, but ſet up for writers upon the ſtock of their own wit and genius merely, not knowing that the greateſt natural genius, if it be not furniſhed with materials by the ſtudy of books, or the practice of buſineſs, and the knowledge of mankind thence ariſing, cannot produce any thing of value; and further, that it is not ſufficient for an artiſt of any kind to have both genius, and materials for that genius to work upon, if he be not likewiſe inſtructed in the rules of the art, and have formed his taſte by the ſtudy and imitation of the beſt models. Theſe are the writers who, by the *brilliancy* of their ſtyle, as it is called, that is, in plain Engliſh, by a florid, and ſometimes pert and flippant manner of ex-

Digitized by Google

preſſion, have debauched the taſte of many of our writers, and made them reject the grave, ſober, and ſenſible ſtyle of the great antient maſters.

And, firſt, let us conſider the ſubject of theſe writings:—If it be of a philoſophical kind, it is either a ſyſtem of nature, without that which is principal in nature, I mean *mind*; for our atheiſtical writers muſt not pretend to be originals in their ſubject, any more than in their ſtyle, but are copies of the French in both. And the French have this eminence above them, that the lively impiety of ſome of them has done much more miſchief than the dull dogmatical infidelity of our irreligious writers. And, indeed, theſe French authors have the honour, if it may be called ſuch, to have propagated, almoſt all over Europe, the diſbelief of all religion, natural as well as revealed, and, by conſequence, a general corruption of manners.—Or it is hiſtory without facts, or, at leaſt, without authorities for facts. For it is part of the ſtate aſſumed by theſe authors, that they will not deign to quote; but we muſt take every thing upon their word,

Digitized by Google

even facts collected from authors, whom it is well known they do not underſtand; and very often they take upon them to contradict facts related by authors, both antient and modern, upon the credit of their miſerable narrow ſyſtems of philoſophy;—Or, laſtly, it is ſome random incoherent thoughts thrown out upon the ſubject of morals or politics, without any real knowledge of human nature, and the various ſteps of its progreſſion *. Such is the matter of thoſe writings, and the ſtyle is ſuitable to the matter, without dignity or gravity, trifling, florid, and flaſhy; for it is not to be expected that ſuch writers ſhould have ſenſe enough to be above *wit*, *point*, and *turn*. They write a kind of epigrammatic ſtyle, conſiſting all of ſhort, ſmart ſentences, without beauty or variety

* I am really diverted with the vanity and futility of theſe *petits maitres* writers upon the ſubject of men and manners. They ſeem to take it for granted, that the French nation is, or, at leaſt, was, in the age of Lewis XIV. the ſtandard of the perfection of human nature. And there is another poſtulatum, which they deſire the reader ſhould grant, viz. that they themſelves are the firſt of their nation, or, at leaſt, have a large ſhare of this national perfection.

Digitized by Google

of compoſition, and as little connection in the language as there is in the matter.

Such are the writers who have *given the tone*, to uſe an expreſſion of their own, to Europe; and the queſtion is, whether, for the ſake of imitating them, we ſhall give up the antients, and our own authors, who have ſo ſucceſsfully imitated the antients? If we are to forſake the antient models in other arts, as, for example, in ſtatuary and painting, and make the French our models in theſe, as well as in the writing art, every connoiſſeur would be ſcandalized, and exclaim againſt the degeneracy of our taſte; he would complain that we no longer reliſhed the chaſte beauties of an Italian hand, but were pleaſed with the gay, florid, coxcomb manner of the French *. The ſame,

* I have been told a ſtory of a French painter, in the King of France's academy of painting at Rome, who was copying Raphael's battle of Conſtantine and Maxentius, where there is a remarkable horſe. An Italian, looking over his ſhoulder, obſerved that the horſe he painted was not the horſe of Raphael: 'Ah, dit il, Monſieur, il faut animer la froideur de 'Raphael.' So he made a kind of coxcomb French horſe.

Digitized by Google

I am perſuaded, will be the judgment, with reſpect to the writing art, of every man who has ſtudied the antient authors; at leaſt, I have never known any who thoroughly underſtood thoſe authors, and yet preferred the ſtyle and compoſition of the French.

I have only further to add, upon the ſubject of the French learning, that, if it continue to prevail as much in Europe for the next half century as it has done for the laſt, there will be an end of antient learning, of which we ſhall know no more than thoſe miſerable disfigured ſcraps of it that are to be found in French books.

But, ſuppoſing a man will write without the aſſiſtance of antient learning, and yet not imitate the French, what is he to do? I will give him the ſame advice that I would give to a man who would paint or practiſe ſculpture without going to Italy, and ſtudying the antient monuments of thoſe arts that are to be ſeen there, which would be to ſtudy the works of ſuch painters or ſta-

Digitized by Google

tuaries among us, as have formed their taſte upon the maſter-pieces of art to be ſeen in Italy. In the ſame manner, I would adviſe a mere modern author to try to acquire a good taſte of ſtyle by ſtudying ſome of the beſt Engliſh authors, ſuch as Milton, Clarendon, Hooker, Dr. Sprat, Biſhop Wilkins, who have ſo ſucceſsfully copied the Greek or Latin maſters. When thoſe authors wrote, there were no French writers that were thought worthy of being imitated. Tacitus was not then come into faſhion; and the ſhort, priggiſh cut of ſtyle, ſo much in uſe now, would not at that time have been endured. In ſhort, no other models of ſtyle were acknowledged but the great authors of antiquity, and chiefly the Greek. The conſequence of which was, that, though there were ſome better, ſome worſe writers, according to the different geniuſes of men, there were none in thoſe days that wrote in a bad taſte. It is, I think, much more for the honour of the nation that we ſhould imitate thoſe authors rather than the French; and I am ſure that, by doing ſo, we ſhall form a much better ſtyle.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XXII.

Compoſition not ſo difficult in Engliſh as in Greek and Latin—This ariſes from the want of rhythm and melody in our language, and the variety of ſtructure of the antient languages—What is proper and ſuitable, eſſential in writing as well as in other arts—Art ſhould not appear too much in compoſition—The practice of making different ſtyles of the ſame words uſeful—Tranſlation, and the uſe to be made of it.

FINE ſpeaking or writing in any language, is, no doubt, a matter of great labour and difficulty. But it ſhould be an encouragement to a Britiſh orator or writer, that it is not near ſo difficult in Engliſh as in Greek or Latin; the reaſon of which is, that it never can be ſo fine, let us labour it as much as we pleaſe. Now, according to the Greek proverb, 'Fine things are difficult*,' and the finer the thing the greater the difficulty.

* χαλεπα τα καλα.

Digitized by Google

A great part of the labour of antient compoſition was beſtowed upon the pleaſure of the ear. For they were not only at the greateſt pains to avoid all harſhneſs of pronunciation, and diſagreeable colliſion of ſounds, but they ſtudied ſo much the numbers even of their proſe, and what they called the melody of their language, I mean their accents, that their compoſitions may be really ſaid, without figure or exaggeration, to have been ſet to muſic; and yet, ſo greedy were their ears, as Cicero has expreſſed it, and ſo difficult to be ſatisfied, that even Demoſthenes, as he ſays, did not always fill his *. This muſical part we have nothing to do with; and, if we ſhould attempt any thing of that kind in our language, we run the hazard of making our compoſition much worſe. For, even among them,

* Speaking of eloquence, he ſays, 'In quo tantum 'abeſt ut noſtra miremur, ut uſque eo difficiles ac 'moroſi ſimus, ut nobis non ſatisfaciat ipſe Demoſ-'thenes; qui quanquam unus eminet inter omnes 'in omni genere dicendi, tamen non ſemper implet 'aures meas: Ita ſunt avidæ et capaces, et ſemper 'aliquid immenſum infinitumque deſiderant;' Orat. ad M. Brutum, c 29.

Digitized by Google

as Cicero has obſerved, *nimium quod eſt, offendit vehementius, quàm id quod videtur parum*; *Orator. c.* 53. Then they muſt alſo have beſtowed a labour upon the various ſtructure and arrangement of their words, ſuch as our modern languages will not admit of. In ſhort, it appears that all we can do in the matter of ſtyle is to chuſe proper words, give them the figures of compoſition ſuitable to the ſubject, and vary thoſe figures as much as we can, ſo as to avoid a monotony of compoſition. But, in all this there is one thing that muſt be particularly attended to, as without it all our other pains to make our compoſitions agreeable would be loſt, and that is, the τὸ πρέπον, as the Greek critics call it, or the *decorum*. This predominates, as the Halicarnaſſian ſhews, in all the arts, and ſets bounds to the artiſts, beyond which they muſt not paſs. And yet it is what no critic, as far as I know, antient or modern, has attempted to define; nor indeed does it appear to me poſſible to define it, as it is dependent upon ſo many circumſtances; but every body of taſte and judgment immediately feels the want of it. And, now-

Digitized by Google

ever well a thing may be ſaid, or if it be too well ſaid, that is, if too much labour be beſtowed, and more ornament upon the compoſition than is ſuited to the ſubject or occaſion, it will rather offend than pleaſe a good judge.

And this leads me to another obſervation, that, if in any art it be neceſſary to conceal art, it is ſo in ſpeaking or writing. And this obſervation applies particularly to the art employed about the words; for the matter ought always to be principal, and, if too much care appear to be beſtowed upon the words, it will offend every judicious hearer or reader. Nor do I know that any greater praiſe can be beſtowed upon a compoſition, than that we do not attend at all to the words, but only to the matter; not but that the words pleaſe, and very much too, if they be good words and fitly put together, but it is a pleaſure that is concealed from us in a good compoſition, like that pleaſure which the Halicarnaſſian tells us ariſes from the melody and rhythms of Demoſthenes, which, ſays he, we ought not to deny, becauſe we do not perceive

Digitized by Google

that the composition is either melodious or numerous. For the art, says he, consists in mixing the accents and the quantities, so that neither the melody nor the rhythm appears; and, if it were otherwise, it would be a fault; for then the composition would appear like a poem or a song *. For proof of the truth of this maxim, that *artis est celare artem*, I have in another place compared the style of Demosthenes and Tacitus †. The first of these has hardly any appearance at all of art, though it be the most artificial of all compositions in prose; and a man who

* The passage is remarkable, and the learned reader will be glad to see it in the original:—Και μηδεις ὑπολαβῃ θαυμαστον ἐιναι τον λογον ἐι καὶ τῃ πεζῃ λεξει φημι δειν ἐμμελειας [leg. ἐυμέλειας] και ἐυρυθμιας, καὶ μεταβολων, ὡσπερ ταις ᾠδαις καὶ τοις ὀργανοις, ει μηδενος τουτων ἀντιλαμβανεται της Δημοσθενους ἀκουων λεξεως· μηδε κακουργειν ὑπολαβῃ τα [μη] προσοντα τῃ ψιλῃ λεξει προσμαρτυρουντα. ἐχει γαρ ταυτα ἡ καλως κατεσκευασμενη λεξις, καὶ μαλιστα ἡ τουδε τοῦ ῥητορος· τῃ δε ευκαιριᾳ και τῃ ποσοτητι την ἀισθησιν διαλανθανει. τα μεν γαρ συγκεχυται· τα δε συνεφθαρται· τα δε ἀλλῳ τινι τροπῳ τῳ ἀκριβειαν ἐκβεβηκε της κατασκευης· ὡστε ἀυτον ἐξηλλαχθαι δοκειν τῳ παντι, και κατα μηδεν ἐοικεναι τοις ποιημασι. Περι της τοῦ Δεμοσθ. δεινοτητος, c. 48.

† See above, page 214.

was not a critic would be apt to imagine that there was nothing more in it but plain ſenſe expreſſed in plain words; whereas the art of Tacitus's ſtyle is apparent to every body; but it is, I think, bad art, and a great deal of labour beſtowed to write ill *. Of this kind would be the labour beſtowed to make our compoſitions numerous and harmonious, like that of the antients; and we have ſome attempts of that kind in proſe compoſition, which do not at all pleaſe me. The antient orators are not only to be excuſed, but praiſed, for ſtudying ſo much the pleaſure of the ear; for it would have been a fault in them, if they had neglected the opportunity which their language afforded them of making their compoſitions muſical. But, if I may preſume to adviſe the Britiſh orator or writer, he will not be at ſo much pains about the ſound of his compoſition, and, if he can avoid ſhocking the ear by rough grating ſounds, or cloying it by a tireſome uniformity, he will be contented. For he may

* This is what the Greek critics call κακοζηλια.

Digitized by Google

as well propoſe to build a palace of rough pebbles, as to make a numerous and flowing compoſition of our harſh monoſyllables*.

* By what I have ſaid here, and in the preceeding part of this chapter, I would not be underſtood to deny that there is a rhythm, at leaſt, if not a melody, belonging to our language. And, indeed, there is a late very ingenious work publiſhed in London, entitled, 'An Eſſay towards eſtabliſhing the Melody and Meaſure of Speech, to be expreſſed and perpetuated by peculiar ſymbols;' which convinces me that a great deal more, in this reſpect, may be made of the Engliſh language than I thought was poſſible; but ſtill, I think, it is a rhythm of a different kind from that of Greek or Latin; nor do I think that, by any labour, we ever can bring our language to pleaſe the ear ſo much by a variety of tones, and of long and ſhort ſyllables, as thoſe antient languages do, or rather *did*; for we have ſo little of the practice of true rhythm and melody in our own language, that no man, who is not a muſician, and has not made a particular ſtudy of tones and quantity of ſyllables, can apply them to Greek or Latin. When I ſpeak of *tones*, I do not mean the tones of paſſion or ſentiment, which are common to all languages, but I mean ſyllabic tones, or accents, properly ſo called, which the Greeks and Romans had, over and above the tones of paſſion and ſentiment, which belonged to the players art among them; whereas the other were an eſſential part of the grammar of the language.

Digitized by Google

Another advice I will venture to give to a young ſtudent, who is deſirous to form a good ſtyle, and to acquire a correct taſte in ſpeaking or writing, is this, That, as of the ſame words different ſtyles are made by different compoſition, he ſhould exerciſe himſelf in making of the ſame words converſation or epiſtolary ſtyle, for example; the hiſtoric or the rhetorical; and he may try alſo to make of them ſuch verſe as Milton has made of plain words. All this may be done only by a different compoſition. He may then proceed to ornament a little by figures both of ſingle words and of compoſition, and try how much ornament each of the three firſt mentioned ſtyles will bear without running into the poetic, which, if the ſubject be ſuitable, will bear every kind of ornament. By this exerciſe he will learn to diſtinguiſh accurately different ſtyles and manners, and will not, in his own compoſitions, jumble and confound them altogether, which, in my judgment, is the great fault of our modern writing.

I would alſo adviſe our young ſtudent not only to ſtudy moſt diligently the antient

Digitized by Google

maſters, but to tranſlate from them. It was in this way that Cicero formed his ſtyle; and, after him, I think, none of us need think the practice mean and ſervile, or below our genius. And I would adviſe to make the tranſlations at firſt as literal as our language will bear; then to uſe greater freedom, and ſo go on by degrees till our performance come at laſt to have no longer that ſtiff air, which tranſlations commonly have, but the free liberal manner of an original compoſition, with as much, however, remaining of the antient author as is ſufficient to diſtinguiſh it from the ordinary compoſitions of the age. For thoſe tranſlations, which intirely modernize the author, I condemn altogether, and conſider them rather as a diſguiſe than a proper dreſs for a reverend antient; for they appear to me like a buſt of Alexander or Julius Cæſar with a toupée and a bag. By this exerciſe continued for a long time (for nothing is to be done at once in this matter) he will form a ſtyle, which will not be altogether antiquated or uncouth, but will have ſomething

Digitized by Google

of the ruſt of antiquity* ſufficient to diſtinguiſh it from the common trivial writings of the day, and will very much pleaſe a true judge of ſtyle, though it will no doubt offend the mere modern writers, who generally conſider themſelves as perfect models and ſtandards, though they may think proper to name as ſuch ſome of their contemporary writers.

* This is what the Halicarnaſſian commends in the ſtyle of Plato; ὅτι πῖνος αὐτῇ (λεξει τοῦ Πλατωνος) καὶ χνοῦς ὁ τῆς ἀρχαιοτητος; ἠρεμα καὶ λεληθοτως ἐπιτρεχει; Epiſt. ad Pompeium, c. 2.

I heard a man ſay, who had ſtudied the antient ſtatues very much, that, in order to form a true taſte of beauty and grace in that art, we muſt live, in a manner, for ſome conſiderable time among thoſe ſtatues, and turn our eyes as much as poſſible from every thing modern. I believe the ſame is true of the writing art. If we would form a perfect ſtyle, we muſt for ſome time converſe only with the beſt antient authors, till we are ſo much poſſeſſed of their taſte and manner, that we may venture upon modern reading, without running much hazard of having our taſte corrupted by it.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the ſophiſtical ſtyle—Three ſeveral ſpecieſes of it—The pedantic—The florid—and the auſtere—The preſent ſtyle generally of the ſecond kind—The antient authors who have written in this ſtyle—Not approved of by the firſt reſtorers of learning—The cauſes that produce the ſophiſtical ſtyle—Men of buſineſs the beſt writers, if not deficient in genius and learning—Sir John Checke's judgment in this matter.

I HAVE obſerved more than once, in the courſe of this work, that, whatever value we may ſet upon the ornaments of ſtyle, it is the *matter* of every compoſition that ſhould be chiefly ſtudied by an author. And, indeed, where too much pains appears to be beſtowed upon the *words*, it offends a judicious reader or hearer. This

Digitized by Google

I think an obſervation of ſuch conſequence, that the reader, I hope, will excuſe me for returning to it, and enlarging a little more upon it.

That the matter is principal in every compoſition, and that the words are only for the ſake of the matter, is what no man of common ſenſe will deny. The words, therefore, ſhould be ſuited to the matter. If the matter be high, ſo ought alſo the words to be; and if again the matter be common and trivial, the words ought to be of the ſame kind. But, whatever the ſubject be, whether high or low, there muſt be ſenſe in the compoſition, for the want of which no ornament of words will atone*. And the finer the words are, if there be no weight in the matter, the compoſition will for that but offend the more, and, to a man of ſenſe, will appear even ridiculous; for it is with the words as with the pronunciation of them.

* Cicero, upon this ſubject, expreſſes himſelf in very ſtrong terms: 'Nihil tam furioſum eſt, quàm verborum 'vel optimorum inanis ſonitus, nulla ſubjecta ſententia 'aut ſcientia.'

Digitized by Google

Nothing in ſpeaking offends you more than great emphaſis and vehement action accompanying words of little or no ſignificancy.

The over-labouring of words made that fault of ſtyle, which was known in antient times by the name of the *ſophiſtical*, becauſe it was by the ſophiſts of old that it was chiefly practiſed *. I think it may be fitly divided into three kinds. The firſt is, when, upon common and ordinary ſubjects, words are uſed that are not common, but

* There were two famous ſophiſts in the days of Socrates, Prodicus and Hippias. Theſe Plato has introduced into his Protagoras; and, as he was a poet as well as a philoſopher, he has imitated incomparably well the ſtyle and manner of each of them; ſee the Protagoras, page 234. Edit. Ficini. The paſſage is too long to be inſerted, but well deſerving to be read by every ſcholar. I ſhall only obſerve upon it, that the ſtyle of Hippias is remarkably metaphorical and florid, and ſuch as, by the generality of readers now-a-days, would be thought very fine; but Plato certainly judged otherwiſe, though he was far from being an enemy to the ornaments of ſtyle, and has laboured words more than perhaps any philoſopher, even too much, according to the opinion of ſome critics. The ſtyle of Prodicus is ſophiſtical in another way; for it is full of nice diſtinctions of the propriety of words.

Digitized by Google

are either altogether new, and made for the occaſion, or not commonly uſed. Of this kind among us are words borrowed from the learned languages, but which yet have not been naturalized by ordinary uſe. Such words are not improper upon high ſubjects, eſpecially where the writer or ſpeaker may be ſuppoſed to be much animated and heated with paſſion; and, in treating of matters of art and ſcience, if our own language does not afford words proper to expreſs our notions, we are allowed to borrow them from more learned languages; but, if ſuch words are uſed upon common or trivial ſubjects, it makes that ſpecies of the ſophiſtical ſtyle, which is well known under the name of the *pedantic*. Nor is it confined to the words only; but, if the turn of the phraſe, and the manner of expreſſion be much too elevated or refined for the ſubject, the ſtyle may ſtill be ſaid to be pedantic *.

* This ſtyle, which it ſeems was once faſhionable in France, is very well ridiculed by Moliere in his comedy of the *Preciеuſes Ridicules*. I will give but one example from it. One of theſe ladies deſires a gentleman to ſit down in the following words:

Digitized by Google

The misfortune of this ſtyle is, that the more it is laboured, the worſe it is, which indeed is the caſe of all kinds of writing, and, in general, of all the works of art that are executed in a bad taſte. Such an author, therefore, never expreſſes himſelf properly and naturally, unleſs, perhaps, where he is careleſs and inattentive to his ſtyle. And this ſhews us how careful every man, who writes or ſpeaks, ſhould be to acquire a good taſte of ſtyle, and a true judgment of what is proper and ſuitable to his ſubject,

' Mais de grace, Monſieur, ne ſoyez pas inexorable ' a ce fauteuil qui vous tend le bras il y a un quart ' d'heure, contentez un peu l'envie qu'il a de vous ' embraſſer.'

Congreve too, in his play of *the Way of the World*, has a great deal of the ſame kind of language, which he has put into the mouth of Lady Wiſhfort, as where he makes her ſay, ' that ſhe hopes Sir Rowland does not ' think her *prone to iteration of nuptials*.'

This ſtyle is alſo ridiculed by Shakeſpeare in the character of Piſtol. It is a good deſcription that Sir John Falſtaff gives of the plain and natural ſtyle, when he deſires Piſtol to *ſpeak like a man of this world*.

Digitized by Google

otherwiſe he may be aſſured that he will loſe all the labour he beſtows upon his compoſition, at leaſt, in the opinion of real critics.

The ſecond ſpecies of the ſophiſtical ſtyle is that which is not unſuitable to the ſubject, but is over-laboured, and too much adorned with tropes, and figures of the pleaſurable kind, ſuch as the metaphor, the antitheſis, and the pariſoſis, and where too much is given to the pleaſure of the ear, and pains more than ſufficient beſtowed to avoid all harſh ſounds, and to give a ſweet flow and agreeable cadence to the periods, and their ſeveral members. The moſt ſtriking examples of this ſtyle are the orations of Iſocrates, and particularly his panegyric, ſo called by way of eminence, for almoſt all his orations may be called by that name, being of the *epideictic* kind*, that is, not intended for buſineſs or action, but to entertain and amuſe

* This is ill tranſlated into Latin by the word *demonſtrative*, which does not at all expreſs the nature of this kind of eloquence. But more of this when I come to treat of rhetoric.

Digitized by Google

panegyries *, or aſſemblies of people met together at the games, or upon occaſion of any other feſtival. Iſocrates is ſaid to have ſpent ten, ſome ſay fifteen years, in compoſing this oration, in which he exhorts the Greeks to join in a war againſt the Perſians—a longer time than Alexander took to finiſh that war †. It is likely, I think, it would have been better, if the fourth part only of that time had been beſtowed upon it; for, though ſuch orations, chiefly calculated for ſhew and oſtentation, as the name denotes, admit of much more ornament than thoſe of buſineſs; yet the ſtyle of this oration is greatly too much ornamented, eſpecially with reſpect to the pleaſure of the ear, if it be

* The orations made by the ſophiſts at thoſe *panegyrical* meetings, were commonly in praiſe of ſome god, heroe, or man; and hence it is that in Engliſh we call praiſe a *panegyric*.

† Timæus the hiſtorian made this compariſon, as Longinus informs us, *cap.* 4. where he thinks proper to find fault with it, and give it as an example of what he calls the *frigid* in ſtyle; but I do not think it ſo bad as he would make it, though it be no doubt magnifying Alexander at the expence of this ſophiſt, as Longinus calls Iſocrates.

Digitized by Google

true what I have read ſomewhere, that there is not to be found in the whole of it two vowels gaping upon one another. In this kind of ſtyle Libanius and Themiſtius, ſophiſts of later times, have written. And, in general, almoſt all the writers of the later times, (I except only the philoſophers of the Alexandrian ſchool,) have more or leſs of this panegyrical ſtyle; and, particularly, there is a writer upon the ſubject of criticiſm, of great name in modern times, and who, I think, is of ſome value for the matter, I mean Longinus, but whoſe ſtyle I think much too florid for his ſubject, or indeed for any ſubject that is treated as a matter of art or ſcience. To be convinced of this, we need only compare his ſtyle of criticiſm with that of Ariſtotle, or the Halicarnaſſian, and the difference will appear ſtriking*.

* This writer, ſpeaking of famous authors, ſays ταῖς ἑαυτων Περιεβαλον ευκλειαις τον αιωνα, c. 1. a ſophiſtical periphraſe, with an arrangement of the words and a cadence that I hold likewiſe to be ſophiſtical. Again, ſpeaking of the uſe of the plural number inſtead of the ſingular, he ſays, τα πληθυντικα μεγαλοφρημονεστερα και αυτω δοξοκομπουντα τῳ οχλῳ του αριθμου, c. 23. Dithyrambic words with very little

The third and laſt ſpecies of the ſophiſtical ſtyle is the very reverſe of this, being as far removed as poſſible from the pleaſurable, the pompous, and the panegyrical. It gives nothing to the pleaſure of the ear; or, if it has any numbers, they are harſh and auſtere. The words it uſes are, many of them, obſolete and antiquated, none of them of the floriď or poetical kind; and, as to its compoſition, it is varied by all the figures poſſible, except ſuch as pleaſe the ear and fancy; and, as ſome of the figures it uſes are very uncouth, and ſuch as derange the conſtruction and natural order of the words very much, hence it is often perplexed and obſcure.

The great author of this ſtyle, the firſt, and, according to the Halicarnaſſian, the laſt, is Thucydides, of whom I have ſpoken

meaning. He deals much in ſimiles too, like ſome of our modern critics, as where he compares Demoſthenes to thunder and lightning, which conſumes things at once, and Cicero to a conflagration, which ſpreads far and wide, and ſometimes is extinguiſhed, and then blazes again.

Digitized by Google

elſewhere *. And I ſhall only add here, that it was probably in emulation to Herodotus that he framed this ſo ſingular ſtyle; for it is evident, from his introduction, that he meant his work to be of a kind quite different from that of Herodotus;—whether it were that he diſapproved of the ſtyle of Herodotus, or deſpaired of excelling, or even of equalling him in that ſtyle †.

It is true, no doubt, what the Halicarnaſſian ſays, that Thucydides, though he had his admirers among the Greeks, yet had no imitators. But there are two Roman authors who certainly imitated him; I mean Salluſt and Tacitus, of whoſe ſtyle I have already ſpoken at great length; and, I think, it is true

* Pag. 198.

† He ſays, that his hiſtory he intended to be κτημα ἐις ἀει μαλλον ἡ αγωνισμα ἐις το παραχρημα ακουειν; by which laſt words he appears to me plainly enough to inſinuate, that Herodotus's hiſtory was of the panegyrical kind, (accordingly it is ſaid to have been read by him at the Olympic games) and more calculated to gain the prize of the day, than to be a laſting monument for the inſtruction of poſterity.

Digitized by Google

what I have there ſaid, that they have not improved upon their original, particularly in the narrative part, which, I think, is much worſe, becauſe it is not ſo plain and natural as that of Thucydides.

I know no ſtyle in Engliſh which reſembles that of Thucydides, unleſs perhaps it be the ſtyle of Milton in his proſe writings; but he, like Demoſthenes, has only taken what is beſt in Thucydides. For Demoſthenes ſtudied Thucydides very much; and accordingly we find in him a great many hyperbatons, parentheſes, and artificial conſtructions, which run out to a great length, and make it neceſſary to connect words very diſtant from one another, with many ſuch like figures, by which his ſtyle is diverſified, and raiſed above common idiom, as much as that of Thucydides, but without his perplexity or obſcurity.

The ſtyle that is moſt uſed at preſent belongs rather to the ſecond ſpecies of the ſophiſtical ſtyle, that which is formed for the pleaſure of the fancy and ear. The diſtinguiſhing characters of it are, firſt, that

Digitized by Google

it is very florid and poetical, and abounds with antitheſis, words anſwering to words, and other pleaſurable figures. Secondly, It is compoſed, for the greater part, in ſhort unconnected ſentences, for I cannot call them periods, with a certain neatneſs and trimneſs in the turn of them, but without any flow or variety in the ryhthm or cadence, even when they are longer. This ſpruce *petit-maitre* ſtyle firſt began, as I have obſerved, in France, and has been followed by ſome later writers in Britain, who had not formed their taſte upon better models.

The antient ſtyle that moſt reſembles this, and probably that from which it was formed, is the ſtyle of Seneca, Pliny the younger, Quinctilian, and, in general, of the writers of that age. It was alſo, as I have ſhewn, the ſtyle of the ſchools of declamation in Rome, from which I derive the corruption of the Roman taſte of eloquence and writing *.

* The laſt of the three authors I have mentioned, I mean Quinctilian, writes, I think, better than either of the other two; but he likewiſe has a ſtrong

Digitized by Google

The ſtyle of theſe authors was not, as I have obſerved, approved of by the firſt reſtorers of learning in Europe. Among the earlieſt of theſe was Angelus Politianus, the

taint of that age. I will give but one example of him from a paſſage in which he has unfortunately meaſured himſelf with a much better writer, I mean Cicero, to whom indeed he refers. It is upon the ſubject of too great luxuriancy in the ſtyle of young men. Of this Quinctilian ſays, *Lib. 2. Inſtitut.* 'Audeat hæc ætas plura, et inveniat, et inventis 'gaudeat, ſint licet illa non ſatis interim ſicca et 'ſevera. Facile remedium eſt ubertatis, ſterilia 'nullo labore vincuntur. Illa mihi in pueris natura 'minimum ſpei dabit, in qua ingenium judicio præ-'ſumitur. Materiam eſſe primum volo vel abundan-'tiorem, atque ultra quàm oporteat fuſam. Quod 'me de his ætatibus ſentire minus mirabitur, quī 'apud Ciceronem legerit, *volo enim ſe efferat in 'adoleſcente fœcunditas.*' Here the ſentences are ſhort and unconnected, but trim and neatly turned. Now hear how Cicero expreſſes pretty much the ſame thought. 'Volo enim ſe efferat in adoleſcente 'fœcunditas. Nam facilius, ſicut in vitibus, re-'vocantur ea, quæ ſeſe nimium profuderunt, quàm, 'ſi nihil valet materies, nova ſarmenta cultura exci-'tantur. Ita volo eſſe in adoleſcente unde aliquid 'amputem. Non enim poteſt in eo eſſe ſuccus diu-'turnus, quod nimis celeriter eſt maturitatem aſſecu-'tum;' *De Oratore, lib. 2.* Here there is not the oratorical roundneſs or flow, neither ſhould it be; but as the matter is connected, ſo are the ſentences; and, though they be not ſo neat and ſo trim as thoſe of

Digitized by Google

firſt elegant writer of Latin, if I am not miſtaken, after the reſtoration of letters. He condemns the ſtyle of all the age of Pliny: 'Optaret alius ut oratorem Plinium 'ſaperem, quod hujus et maturitas et diſci-'plina laudatur; ego contra totum illud 'aſpernari me dicam Plinii ſæculum *.'

Theſe are, if not all, at leaſt, I think, the chief kinds of the ſophiſtical ſtyle, a ſtyle which is not faulty through negligence or ignorance, but from overmuch ſtudy and labour. I have already given a particular reaſon why Thucydides beſtowed ſo much pains to make his ſtyle worſe than it would otherwiſe have been; and I will now endeavour to give ſome more general reaſons for this laborious affectation.

And the firſt is a littleneſs of mind, which makes men ſtudy much what is

Quinctilian, there is nothing that offends the ear like the abrupt cadence of Tacitus, and there is nothing of quaintneſs or ſmartneſs, but the whole is ſimple and natural.

* Angeli Politiani epiſtola prima.

Digitized by Google

trifling, or leſs principal in arts, ſciences, and even the common affairs of life. Senſe, ſpirit, and a certain greatneſs of mind, are neceſſary for ſpeaking and writing well, no leſs than for acting well. A man of a philoſophical mind and exalted genius will, like Socrates in Plato *, deſpiſe the embelliſhment of words, and think that time miſpent which he employs in poliſhing them and ſetting them in order, for the purpoſe of captivating the ears and fancies of men; or, if he ſhould ſtoop to do it for any important public ſervice, he will certainly not over-do it, but will always conſider the matter as principal, and chiefly deſerving his care.

Another reaſon, and which, I believe, has contributed more than any other to

* Plato makes Socrates ſay, in the beginning of his Apology, that it would not be becoming him, at his time of life, to form and faſhion words like a young man: οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν δήπου πρέποι, ὦ ἄνδρες, τῇδε τῇ ἡλικίᾳ ὥσπερ μειρακίῳ Πλαττοντι λόγους, εἰς ὑμᾶς εἰσιέναι. And Ariſtotle has told us, that the ſtyle, and every thing belonging to rhetoric, is addreſſed to the opinions and fancies of men; Rhet. Lib. iii. c. i.

Digitized by Google

make men labour words with the anxious diligence of a ſophiſt, is the want of the practice of applying ſpeaking or writing to buſineſs, or the common affairs of life. Men of great leiſure, who are very good ſcholars, but are ignorant of the world, and unpractiſed in buſineſs, are very apt to form to themſelves a ſtyle, which appears to them, and may appear to others, very fine, but is intirely unfit for buſineſs, and could not be endured by aſſemblies of men met to deliberate upon public affairs of great importance, or by judges, who were to decide cauſes upon ſuch ſpeaking or writing. Thoſe, on the other hand, who are in the practice of buſineſs, ſoon diſcover that it is not the ornament of words, but the weight of matter and argument, that will convince men, who hear or read, in order to be informed, and that what art there is in the compoſition muſt be concealed as much as poſſible. Such an orator or writer, therefore, will not uſe the pedantic ſtyle of the *precieuſes ridicules*; neither will his ſtyle abound with the flowers of poetry, nor will be pompous and theatrical,

Digitized by Google

like Iſocrates, becauſe he knows, from certain experience and obſervation, that ſuch a manner tickles the ears and amuſes the fancy, but does not convince or determine men to act; and far leſs will he labour to obſcure and involve his ſenſe, as Thucydides has done, whoſe manner would be as offenſive to the ears of the people, as perplexing to their underſtanding. And, I am perſuaded, the Halicarnaſſian is in the right when he maintains, that no orator of Greece ever ſpoke in that manner.

That men of buſineſs, if they are not deficient in genius or learning, make the beſt ſpeakers or writers, is not only agreeable to reaſon, but is verified by fact and obſervation. The greateſt orators in Greece were the two rivals, Demoſthenes and Æſchines, both much verſant in public buſineſs, and accuſtomed to ſpeak to the people; and, in Rome, the two beſt writers, (I mean proſe-writers, for I ſpeak not of poets, whoſe ſtyle is quite different from that of buſineſs and common life), as well as ſpeakers, were Julius Cæſar and Cicero, both men eminent

Digitized by Google

in buſineſs. On the other hand, Iſocrates and Thucydides, among the Greeks, were neither of them men of buſineſs, nor accuſtomed to ſpeak to judges, or to the people, but formed in their cloſets a kind of ideal eloquence, in a very different taſte indeed, but both equally unfit for the affairs of life. Salluſt and Tacitus too, among the Romans, the worſt writers that I know of any name or reputation, do not appear to have had any practice of eloquence, unleſs perhaps in the ſchools of declamation*.

* As to Salluſt, what Sir John Checke, one of the firſt and beſt ſcholars that ever were in England, ſaid of him, is well worth reading, as it is reported by Roger Aſcham, his ſcholar (whom I quoted before) in his work entitled the *School-maſter*, or perfect way of bringing up youth, p. 339. of the edition of his works publiſhed by James Bennet in 1771. Sir John Checke had ſaid, that he could not recommend Salluſt as a good pattern of ſtyle for young men, 'his writing being neither plain for 'the matter, nor ſenſible for men's underſtanding. 'And what is the cauſe thereof, Sir? quoth I. Ve-'rily, ſaid he, becauſe in Salluſt's writing is more 'art than nature, and more labour than art; and in 'his labour alſo too much toil, as it were with an 'uncontented care to write better than he could; a 'fault common to very many men. And therefore 'he doth not expreſs the matter lively and naturally with

Digitized by Google

Even Cicero, as I have obſerved elſewhere, would have been a better orator, if he had not practiſed ſo much upon fictitious ſubjects, but had exerciſed himſelf from the

' common ſpeech, as ye ſee Xenophon doth in Greek;
' but it is carried and driven forth artificially, after too
' learned a ſort, as Thucydides doth in his orations. And
' how cometh it to paſs, ſaid I, that Cæſar and Cicero's
' talk is ſo natural and plain, and Salluſt's writing ſo
' artificial and dark, when all the three lived in one
' time? I will freely tell you my fancy herein, ſaid
' he. Surely Cæſar and Cicero, beſide a ſingular
' prerogative of natural eloquence, given unto them
' by God, both two, by uſe of life, were daily ora-
' tors among the common people, and greateſt counſellors
' in the ſenate-houſe; and therefore gave themſelves to
' uſe ſuch ſpeech as the meaneſt ſhould well underſtand,
' and the wiſeſt beſt allow; following carefully that
' good counſel of Ariſtotle, *Loquendum, ut multi;*
' *ſapiendum, ut pauci.* Salluſt was no ſuch man,
' neither for will to goodneſs, nor ſkill by learning,
' but ill given by nature, and made worſe by bring-
' ing up, ſpent the moſt part of his youth very miſ-
' orderly in riot and leachery, in the company of
' ſuch who, never giving their mind to honeſt do-
' ing, could never inure their tongue to wiſe ſpeak-
' ing. But, at laſt, coming to better years, and
' buying wit at the dearеſt hand (that is, by long
' experience of the hurt and ſhame that cometh of
' miſchief), moved by the counſel of them that were
' wiſe, and carried by the example of ſuch as were
' good, he firſt fell to honeſty of life, and after to
' the love of ſtudy and learning; and ſo became ſo

Digitized by Google

beginning, as Demoſthenes did, upon matters of buſineſs. In later times, when the ſchools of declamation became ſtill more in faſhion among the Romans, the *umbraticus*

'new a man, that Cæſar, being dictator, made him 'prætor in Numidia, where he, abſent from his coun-'try, and not inured with the common talk of Rome, but 'ſhut up in his ſtudy, and bent wholly upon reading, 'did write the ſtory of the Romans. And, for the better 'accompliſhing of the ſame, he read Cato and Piſo in 'Latin, for gathering of matter and truth, and Thucy-'dides in Greek, for the order of his ſtory, and furniſhing 'of his ſtyle.'

A little after, in p. 343. ſpeaking of Thucydides, he ſays, 'that he likewiſe wrote his ſtory, not at 'home in Greece, but abroad in Italy, and there-'fore ſmelleth of a certain outlandiſh kind of talk, 'ſtrange to them of Athens, and diverſe from their 'writing that lived in Athens and Greece, and 'wrote at the ſame that Thucydides did, as Lyſias, 'Xenophon, Plato, and Iſocrates, the pureſt and 'plaineſt writers that ever wrote in any tongue, and 'beſt examples for any man to follow, whether he write 'Latin, Italian, French, or Engliſh. Thucydides alſo 'ſeemeth, in his writing, not ſo much benefited by 'nature as holpen by art, and carried forth by de-'ſire, ſtudy, labour, toil, and over-great curioſity, who 'ſpent twenty-ſeven years in writing his eight books 'of hiſtory.'

As to Tacitus, neither Sir John Checke nor Mr. Aſcham does ſo much as mention him; nor do I believe

Digitized by Google

doctor, as Petronius expreſſes it, *ingenia delevit.*

I do not deny, however, that exceptions to this rule may be found among the antient writers, and particularly the Halicarnaſſian may be reckoned one; for it does not appear that he ever pleaded cauſes, or was engaged in civil buſineſs of any kind. But it is to be conſidered, firſt, that he was a teacher of youth, to whom, therefore, he was obliged to ſpeak in a language eaſy and natural. Secondly, He had formed his ſtyle by the imitation of ſuch authors as Demoſthenes, who were real men of buſineſs; and this appears to me to be the only way that a mere ſcholar can form a ſtyle, which does not ſmell too much of the lamp.

I think it is unlucky for the authors of modern times, that ſo few of them have been men of buſineſs. The beſt of them, I

that any man of thoſe days conſidered him as a pattern of ſtyle—that was reſerved for later and more ignorant times.

Digitized by Google

will venture to ſay, were ſuch; and my Lord Shaftſbury, whoſe ſtyle I have elſewhere commended, would have been ſtill a better writer, if he had been more engaged in public buſineſs, and had been a ſpeaker in either houſe of parliament; for in that caſe, he would not have written in a manner which is, of all others, the leaſt proper for buſineſs. And I ſay the ſame of Plato, whom he has admired and imitated ſo much; for, if he had either confined himſelf intirely, as Xenophon did, to his maſter Socrates's manner of teaching, or, as he would needs be a rhetorician, if he had had the practice of ſpeaking in public, he would have avoided thoſe faults of ſtyle which the Halicarnaſſian has ſo juſtly cenſured in him.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XXIV.

A ſhort account of the fate of antient learning in the ſeveral periods of the world—All the learning of Europe originally from Egypt—The firſt great blow to learning the deſtruction of the colleges of the Egyptian prieſts—The ſecond, the deſtruction of the Pythagorean colleges in Italy—The third, the loſs of the liberty of Greece, and the extinction of learning and good taſte there—The fourth, the loſs of liberty at Rome, and the corruption of taſte there—The fifth, the conqueſts of the Saracens and Turks—The preſent ſtate of antient learning in Europe—How the taſte of it is to be revived.

AS I have ſaid ſo much in praiſe of the antient learning, in this and the preceding volumes of this work, it may not be improper, before I conclude this volume, to give ſome general account of

Digitized by Google

the fate of this learning in the ſeveral ages of the world, as far as they are recorded.

That all, or by far the greater part of the many arts and ſciences, which Europe is at preſent poſſeſſed of, came originally from Egypt, I hold to be an inconteſtible truth. All the neceſſary arts of life, and all other arts of uſe or ornament depending upon the knowledge of the hidden powers of nature, were, I believe, practiſed in the higheſt perfection in Egypt. But the liberal and elegant arts, ſuch as fine ſpeaking and writing, poetry, ſtatuary, and painting, though the elements of them were likeways brought from Egypt into Greece, proſpered much more in that country, and were carried to a much greater height than ever they were in Egypt. The reaſon of which is, that theſe are popular arts, and are therefore never carried far, except in popular governments, ſuch as thoſe in Greece. This is particularly true of eloquence, which, as early as the days of Homer and the Trojan war, was the chief inſtrument of government among the Greeks. And indeed it muſt of neceſſity be ſo, where the power is

Digitized by Google

in the hands of the people, who muſt be perſuaded before they act. Now, as I have obſerved in the beginning of this volume, ſpeaking is the principal art, prior both in time and dignity to the writing art, which was only grafted on it. For, though the ſpeaking art was in very great perfection in the days of Homer, as is evident from his poems, I believe there was very little poetry committed to writing at that time, and no proſe at all. But, as to ſciences, ſuch as geometry, aſtronomy, natural philoſophy, metaphyſics and theology, I believe they were carried to a perfection in Egypt that they have never ſince exceeded.

The firſt great revolution of learning and philoſophy was the conqueſt of Egypt by the Perſians, and the deſtruction of the Egyptian colleges of prieſts. Of this I have ſpoken elſewhere *; and it was, in my opinion, the greateſt blow to ſcience that it ever received, and which it has never ſince perfectly recovered. It did, however, lift its head again, and flouriſhed for ſome time in the Pythagorean colleges in Italy; for Pythagoras went to Egypt before the Per-

* Vol. ii. p. 262.

Digitized by Google

ſian conqueſt; and, as he was there no leſs than twenty-two * years, and was initiated into the prieſtly order, there can be no doubt but that he brought away with him a great deal of the Egyptian learning, at leaſt much more of it than any Greek did before or after his time. For thoſe that went before him, ſuch as Orpheus, Muſæus, and Melampus, appear to have brought away nothing with them but muſic and ſome myſtical theology; and Thales, the only philoſopher who was there before him, appears to have learned nothing there but ſome elements of geometry, and a little phyſiology. And, with regard to Plato and Eudoxus, who went to Egypt ſo long after Pythagoras, beſides that they went thither at a time when ſcience muſt have been deep in its decline, we are informed that the prieſts were not at all communicative to them †.

Theſe Pythagorean ſchools in Italy produced, while they flouriſhed, ſome of the

* Jamblichus in vita Pythagoræ, c. 4.

† Strabo, Lib. xvii. p. 806. where he tells us, that Plato and Eudoxus lived thirteen years with the prieſts of Heliopolis, in order to learn aſtronomy; but, though they were at great pains to perſuade the prieſts to teach them,

Digitized by Google

greateſt men that ever exiſted, in philoſophy, government, and arms. How theſe ſchools of philoſophy were deſtroyed and diſperſed, is related by the author of the life of Pythagoras, as I have elſewhere mentioned*; and this I hold to have been the ſecond fatal blow to learning and philoſophy.

Some planks were ſaved of this ſhipwreck, and diſperſed all over Europe; but they were beſt collected and preſerved by Plato and Ariſtotle in Greece, where both arts and ſciences flouriſhed very much for ſome time. But Greece, with its liberty and glory in arms, loſt alſo its taſte for the ſciences and fine arts; and, as the Halicarnaſſian tells us †, they were, ſome time before his age, become almoſt barbarous. And this I make to be the third downfal of learning.

they learned but a few theorems; the barbarians, as Strabo calls thoſe learned prieſts, concealing the greater part from them. See what I have further ſaid upon this ſubject, vol. ii. p. 243. in the note.

* Vol. ii. p. 262.

† De Antiquis Oratoribus, in initio.

Digitized by Google

It again revived, as the ſame author informs us *, under the patronage of ſome of the great men of Rome, who, by the countenance and protection they gave to ſuch men as the Halicarnaſſian, introduced philoſophy and the fine arts into Rome, and revived them in Greece. In Rome they were ſhort-lived; for the violent tyranny of the Emperors, and the general corruption of manners, ſoon put an end to them. But they continued longer in Greece; from whence they returned again to their native land, I mean Egypt; for in Alexandria there were ſchools of philoſophers, geometers, aſtronomers, grammarians, and rhetoricians, and there were good writers down even to the invaſion of the Saracens, and the ſecond deſtruction of the Alexandrian library. In Italy, and all over the weſt of Europe, learning had been before extinguiſhed, and all fine arts, by the invaſion of other barbarians, I mean the Goths and Vandals. And here we have learning again put down for the fourth time, except ſome ſmall remains of it that were preſerved in Conſtantinople.

* Ubi ſupra.

Digitized by Google

But ſcience began again to dawn, and from a quarter whence it could not have been expected, I mean from the Saracens, the ſame mad and barbarous enthuſiaſts who had deſtroyed the Alexandrian library. But Greece a ſecond time catched its conquerors, and the Saracens became as zealous for Greek learning as ever they had been enemies to it. From them the firſt rays of ſcience enlightened the weſt; for we got ſome knowledge of phyſic, and of Ariſtotle's philoſophy from them. But we may be ſaid to have ſtill continued barbarous till the taking of Conſtantinople by the Turks, the moſt indocile and uncultivable of all barbarians; for they are among the few people that we read of in hiſtory, who have been diſſolved in luxury and effeminacy, without being firſt ſoftened and mitigated by arts. From thoſe barbarians fled the learned Greeks that yet remained in Conſtantinople, and, taking refuge in Rome, introduced there the Greek language, and, with it, the genuine Greek philoſophy and Greek arts; and thus, by a ſtrange revolution of human affairs, it ſo happened that Greece

Digitized by Google

once more brought arts into Latium*, again became barbarous, and Rome and its great men (for ſo I think I may call Leo X. and his cardinals) once more reſtored learning, which from thence ſpread all over Europe with a moſt rapid progreſs.

That learning is now again deep in its decline all over Europe, cannot be denied, if it be true, as I think I have ſhewn, that the Greek authors are the moſt perfect ſtandards, both of juſt thinking and elegant writing; for, in many parts of Europe, the knowledge of the Greek language is loſt, almoſt as much as it was before the taking of Conſtantinople. It is indeed the peculiar honour of England, that the Greek learning is more eſteemed, and better preſerved there than any where elſe. But, even there, it is not ſo much cultivated as formerly; nor are the Greek maſters ſo much ſtudied and imitated as the models of fine writing. And what have we got in the place of theſe? Either Latin imitators, ſome of which are certainly not good; and, if

* Artes intulit agreſti Latio. HORAT.

Digitized by Google

they were better, every man of genius and ſpirit would chuſe to drink at the pure fountains rather than at the ſtreams, often muddy, and always more or leſs diſcoloured;—or French authors, who have introduced a kind of Aſiatic eloquence into Europe, more unlike the true Attic muſe than any thing that ever came from Aſia in antient times. I have already obſerved, that it would be the ruin of other arts, ſhould we follow the florid taſte of the French in them, and give over ſtudying and copying thoſe beautiful monuments of antient art, ſtill to be ſeen in Italy; and the ſame muſt happen to the writing art, as ſoon as the Greek monuments of that kind ceaſe to be ſtudied and imitated.

But, how are Greek learning and fine writing to be revived? No other way that I know, but as they were twice revived in Rome—by the patronage and protection of the great, who have it in their power to make Greek learning as faſhionable every where in Europe as it was in Britain two hundred years ago, when even ladies of the higheſt rank both wrote and ſpoke Greek, and Queens

Digitized by Google

were proud of being able to read the great authors of that language in the original. For no art or ſcience, or even virtue, will flouriſh in a country where it is not faſhionable; and it is the example and the praiſe of the men of rank in a country that make every thing faſhionable.

From this ſhort hiſtory of learning, it appears, that the ſeeds of arts and ſciences are by nature ſown in the human mind, and have always grown up, flouriſhed, and produced fruit, with proper culture and in a favourable ſoil and climate, till they were either ſwept away by inundations of barbarians, or choaked by the cares attending the acquiring of money, or, what is ſtill more fatal to all arts and ſciences, the enjoyment of it in luxury, indolence, and diſſipation. Theſe ſhorten our lives as well as conſume our time; ſo that it may be truly ſaid of us what Seneca ſays of times not unlike ours, *paucos annos inter ſtudia et vitia, non æqua portione, dividimus**.

* Natur. Quæſt. lib. 7. cap. 25.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XXV.

Concluſion of this part of the work.—Two kinds of men will deſpiſe it—the avaricious and the luxurious.—Something ſaid to the firſt of theſe, more to the laſt.—Leiſure, which is thought ſo great a bleſſing, is the greateſt ſcource of human miſery, if not well employed.—Education only can enable men to employ leiſure well.—Bodily exerciſes formerly employed much time—Theſe now laid aſide—Arts and ſciences now only remain to fill up leiſure.—By theſe only we have any advantages over ſavages.—The Romans a ſtriking example of the effect of Greek philoſophy and arts—Theſe preſerved virtue among them in the moſt degenerate times.—Another uſe of antient learning is to improve our luxury, and prevent, as far as poſſible, the bad effects of it.—The want of it in this reſpect among us, and the fatal conſequences of ſuch want.

AND here I conclude this part of my work, in which I have endeavoured

Digitized by Google

to explain the nature of the ornaments of ſpeech, pointed to the fountains from whence they are to be drawn, and ſhewn to what ſubjects they are properly applied.

There are two kinds of men who, I know, will very much deſpiſe my labours on this ſubject. Of the firſt kind are thoſe who value nothing but money; who, if they do not believe that nothing exiſts except money, as Mr. Fielding ſays of one of that character*, at leaſt, are concerned about nothing elſe exiſting. Of the other kind are the vain and the luxurious, who do not love money for its own ſake, but deſire to enjoy it according to the faſhionable taſte of pleaſure.

To thoſe of the firſt kind I have nothing to ſay, except that I wiſh them much joy of the only pleaſure they are capable of reliſhing. And thus much I will ſay in commendation of their taſte, that it is the paſſion, the moſt conſtant in human nature, and which, of all others, has the leaſt reſpite or intermiſſion. For it operates almoſt continually, like gravitation, or any other

* Hiſtory of Tom Jones.

Digitized by Google

power of nature; and, in proportion as other paſſions decreaſe, it increaſes, and never ends but with the man. Long may ſuch buſy mortals live to accumulate wealth, of which it is to be hoped, that ſome, who come after them, may make a proper uſe; and, when they die, they may, in their epitaph, inſult philoſophy and learning, in the way that Trimalchio does in Petronius, 'Here lies ſuch a man, who died worth 'half a million, *et philoſophum nunquam* 'audivit.'

With reſpect to the other kind of men, as they have commonly ſome taſte, of which the avaricious are intirely void, and, if that taſte were well directed, might become worthy and uſeful men, I will beſtow more words upon them, and endeavour to point out to them the right road to pleaſure.

A young man, juſt entering upon life, with an opulent fortune and high taſte of pleaſure, thinks that he has in his hands the means of being perfectly happy, and reckons it his peculiar good fortune, that he is not obliged to labour and drudge in any

Digitized by Google

buſineſs or profeſſion, but has *leiſure* to be happy. But he does not conſider that leiſure, though the wiſh of all men*, is the ſource of the greateſt miſery to our ſpecies, if not rightly employed; nor do I know any vice or folly that is not to be derived from it. Even the brute animals, when tamed and domeſticated, and ſupplied with the neceſſaries of life by the labour of others, are made, in ſome degree, unhappy by leiſure. Thus a dog, when he has been long idle, is manifeſtly uneaſy, and at a loſs what to do with himſelf; and accordingly, when he is called forth to his employment, we ſee with what joy and triumph he accepts of the invitation. But the dog is happy in this reſpect, that he has not invented any means of filling up his leiſure that is deſtructive to him; ſo that he only ſuffers the pains of what the French call *ennui*. But man has employed his ſuperior ſagacity in deviſing ſo many ways of conjuring this *foul fiend* (to uſe an expreſſion of Shake-

* Otium Divos rogat in patenti
Prenſus Ægæo——
Otium bello furioſa Thrace,
Otium Medi pharetra decori.
HORAT. Ode 16. lib. 2.

Digitized by Google

ſpeare), moſt of them ruinous both to body and mind, that unleſs he can form a taſte for ſomething better than the common amuſements, he muſt of neceſſity be an unhappy man.

This is the caſe of every man who has leiſure which he does not know how to employ properly. But it is much more the caſe of thoſe who have wealth as well as leiſure. For wealth is an incitement to every vice and folly, by readily furniſhing the means of gratifying them. And ſuch a man, if he has not formed a right taſte of pleaſure, cannot avoid being vicious and fooliſh, and by conſequence miſerable, in a very high degree.

And how is this right taſte of pleaſure to be formed? Only by a proper education, by which we are early accuſtomed to what is right and good, fair and handſome; the conſequence of which is, that we delight in thoſe things as much as others do in the contrary, and purſue them from habit, as well as from judgment and deliberate choice. It is

Digitized by Google

therefore true what Ariſtotle has obſerved*, that the chief advantage of a good education is to teach us how to employ our leiſure. This obſervation will apply to men of every buſineſs or profeſſion, if they have any leiſure at all; but much more to men whoſe whole life is leiſure. And indeed the greateſt good fortune, that can befal a man who has not education, is to have no leiſure at all, but to be conſtantly employed, eſpecially in bodily labour, for which by far the greater part of mankind are only fit. So that men, not properly educated, are by nature deſtined to be ſlaves and drudges, or elſe to be miſerable †.

There was one way, by which the men of rank and opulence, of this as well as other countries of Europe, did formerly fill up their leiſure, but which is now almoſt intirely out of faſhion; I mean exerciſes. And indeed a man, who would keep his body in high athletic order, will not have

* Ariſtotle's Politic. lib. 7. cap. 15. and lib. 8. cap. 3.

† As ſome men are by nature incapable of a liberal education, they are thoſe, who, as Ariſtotle has told us, are by nature ſlaves. Ibid. lib. 1. cap. 5.

Digitized by Google

much time to ſpare. How much thoſe exerciſes were practiſed in antient times, and how neceſſary a part they made of the education of the citizens of every free ſtate, eſpecially of the gentlemen, or men of diſtinction, is well known to every ſcholar. Among the antients, there was one people, who were eminent for nothing but athletic exerciſes, and the ſtrength of body thereby acquired; and who, by that excellency alone, under the conduct of a man who by accident had the benefit of a philoſophical education, attained to great power and eminence. The learned reader will know that I mean the Thebans, who, under the conduct of Epaminondas, became the leaders of Greece*. This ſhews us, that

* Plutarch, in the life of Pelopidas, informs us, that, while the Spartans were in poſſeſſion of the Citadel of Thebes, and they and the Thebans exerciſed together in the ſame Palæſtras, the Thebans, by the advice of Epaminondas, wreſtled with the Spartans; and, finding themſelves ſuperior in that exerciſe, Epaminondas from thence excited them to aſſert their liberty, and ſhake off the Spartan yoke. This produced the recovery of their Citadel out of the hands of the Spartans, and the famous battles of Leuctra and Mantinæa; in which, from the account given by hiſtorians, and particularly by Diodorus Siculus, it is evident, that the Thebans con-

Digitized by Google

though the endowments of the mind certainly hold the firſt rank, yet the faculties of the body ought not to be neglected; and they ſhould be ſo much more generally

quered, not ſo much by the conduct of Epaminondas, or their valour and military diſcipline, as by their ſuperiority in wreſtling and ſtrength of body: for in that way muſt neceſſarily be decided all battles in which men fight in cloſe order, and hand to hand; where all long weapons, ſuch as ſpears, muſt ſoon be broken, or rendered uſeleſs, which actually happened, as Diodorus informs us, at the battle of Mantinæa. Thus it appears, that ſuperiority in bodily ſtrength, and gymnaſtic exerciſes, produced that great revolution in the affairs of Greece, by which the Lacedemonians, who had been ſo long leaders of Greece, and, after the conqueſt of Athens, thought themſelves invincible, were ſtript of all their power and glory, and ſo humbled, that they could never afterwards lift their head.

For the reſt, the Thebans were rude, brutiſh people, without education or learning of any kind; the conſequence of which was, that, after having obtained the dominion of Greece, by the means I have mentioned, they ſoon loſt it, almoſt as ſoon as they loſt their philoſophical leader Epaminondas, and, not long after that, their city and their liberty, by the folly and brutality of their then leaders. This is the judgment of Ephorus the hiſtorian, as quoted by Strabo, Lib. ix. p. 401. upon which Strabo's own reflection is worth obſerving: 'That 'the Romans, by laying aſide their antient rudeneſs and 'ignorance, and acquiring arts and ſciences, were enabled 'to conquer the world.'

Digitized by Google

cultivated, that for one man who is by nature fitted to excel in the qualities of the mind, there are at leaſt a hundred that might become eminent in bodily exerciſes. But if the exerciſes were neither of uſe nor ornament, they are neceſſary for the voluptuous and luxurious, both in order to give them a true reliſh for their pleaſures, and to prevent, as much as poſſible, the bad effects of them. By exerciſes, I mean not what is commonly called *exerciſe*, but which really does not deſerve the name, at leaſt it does not anſwer the definition of it given by Galen the Greek phyſician, viz. *motion that alters the breath;* but I mean ſtrong athletic exerciſes, ſuch as are abſolutely neceſſary for working off the effects of the full table and luxurious banquet; for luxury, joined with indolence, is certain ruin both to body and mind.

Athletic exerciſes, however, at leaſt ſuch as are proper to give any great degree of ſtrength or agility to the body, are almoſt intirely diſuſed; ſo that a human body in

Digitized by Google

*good order** (to ſpeak in the jockey ſtyle) is hardly to be found.

There remain then only arts and ſciences to fill up the time of the rich and idle; and theſe, if they were properly cultivated, would make ſuch men leſs luxurious, and, by conſequence, the ſevere exerciſes leſs neceſſary for them. But, if theſe are alſo neglected, and if the great men of a country, who, by their birth and rank, are deſtined to fill the firſt offices in it, apply themſelves to no buſineſs or profeſſion, nor to arts, ſciences, or exerciſes, it is evident that the country muſt be undone, and that

* The antients diſtinguiſhed betwixt ὑγιεια, or *health*, and ἐυεξια, or *good order*; the laſt of which was only the effect of gymnaſtic exerciſes; and there was a maſter of ſuch exerciſes among them, called the παιδοτριβης, who may be ſaid to have been a *man-groom*, for he underſtood the art of forming the athletic habit in men, as well as our grooms do the putting horſes in order. And, if a man among them was not put into this kind of training, it was eaſily diſcovered from his look, and the appearance of his body. This explains what Socrates, in Xenophon's memorabilia, ſays to one of his followers, who neglected the exerciſes of the Palæſtra: ὡς ἰδιωτικως ἐχις τὸ σωμα, i. e. 'How like that of a vulgar, untaught 'man is the habit of your body!'

Digitized by Google

they themſelves muſt lead a miſerable and contemptible life.

Such men would be much affronted, if they were compared with ſavages, whom they will hardly allow to be of the ſame ſpecies with themſelves; and yet it is a certain fact, that it is only by means of our arts and ſciences that we have any advantages over ſavages. For they have more ſagacity and better parts than we have, and likewiſe much greater ſtrength of mind, by which they perſevere in all their undertakings with wonderful conſtancy and firmneſs, and can endure pain, and death itſelf, with a patience and fortitude that is almoſt incredible. Beſides, a ſavage can hunt and fiſh, make the inſtruments for theſe purpoſes, and provide himſelf with all the neceſſaries of life. He can likewiſe ſerve his country, either in council or fight. But I do not know that there is upon the face of the earth a more uſeleſs, more contemptible, and more miſerable animal than a wealthy, luxurious man, without buſineſs or profeſſion, arts, ſciences, or exerciſes.

Digitized by Google

If examples were wanting to ſhew the neceſſity of arts and ſciences in a wealthy and luxurious nation, that of the Romans would alone be ſufficient. The wealth of that people, about the end of the commonwealth and the beginning of the empire, was prodigious, and almoſt exceeding belief. For the wealth of the whole world then known was centered in Rome, collected from countries very much more opulent as well as more populous, than they are now. The eſtates of ſome individuals in Britain, great as they may ſeem to us, are but mean and contemptible, compared with the eſtates of the rich citizens of Rome. I doubt whether there has hitherto been among us any eſtate of Nabob, Commiſſary, Stockjobber, or Gameſter, that has exceeded half a million. But, among the Romans, eſtates of ſeveral millions were not uncommon *. And though the crime of ſuicide in Britain be frequent enough, yet I have heard of no Britiſh man that has put himſelf to death,

* See Dr. Arbuthnot's account of the wealth of the Romans, in his treatiſe upon antient coins, &c.

Digitized by Google

as Apicius did, because his fortune was reduced to £80,000 sterling*. And their luxury and magnificence was in proportion to their wealth. The expence sometimes of a single supper, among them, would be equal to what we should reckon a competent fortune even in these days †. In this country, our richest men are contented with a house in town and a country-seat; and indeed it is with difficulty that their fortunes can support the expence of both. But the Roman grandees, besides their palaces in town, had magnificent villas in different parts of Italy. Cicero, who was far from being rich or expensive, had no less than eighteen of them ‡. And, as if the land was not sufficient for their buildings, they often encroached upon the sea, which they covered with their villas, sometimes to a

* Seneca, Consolatio ad Helviam, cap. 10.

† Seneca speaks of single suppers that consumed the whole estate of a knight: 'Quid est cœna sumptuosa flagitiosius, et equestrum censum consumente?' Seneca, Epist. 95.

‡ Middleton's Life of Cicero, vol. 2. p. 508.

Digitized by Google

conſiderable diſtance from the ſhore*. Their houſes, both in town and country, were filled with ſlaves, who were ſometimes ſo numerous, and of ſo many different countries, that they were divided into nations.

What was it that preſerved any virtue or manhood among a people ſo rich and ſo luxurious? The bad effects of wealth in Britain, ſmall in compariſon of theirs, upon the morals of the people, have been moſt ſenſibly felt and regretted. But, among the Romans, even in the times we ſpeak of, there are many ſhining examples to be found of the greateſt virtues, the moſt eminent abilities, fortitude and ſtrength both of body and mind. To what is this to be aſcribed? What antidote had they againſt

* Contracta piſces æquora ſentiunt,
Jactis in altum molibus; huc frequens
Cæmenta demittit Redemptor
Cum famulis, dominuſque terræ
Faſtidioſus.——— Hor. Ode i. lib. 3.

Cæmentis licet occupes
Tyrrhenum omne tuis et mare Apulicum.
Ibid. Ode xxiv. lib. 3.

Digitized by Google

that moſt deadly poiſon of the human race, more fatal in its conſequences than war, famine, peſtilence, or any other calamity that ever befel the kind, I mean luxury? No other that I can diſcover, except the Greek philoſophy* and Greek arts. Theſe were unneceſſary while they continued poor, and preſerved the antient ſeverity of their manners, but became abſolutely neceſſary when they grew rich, and the public diſcipline of the ſtate was relaxed, as well as the private manners of the citizens corrupted. Philoſophy, which among them was, *The knowledge of all things human and divine*, that is, of the whole of nature and the ſyſtem of the univerſe, preſented ſo grand a ſpectacle, as raiſed thoſe among them, who had any natural elevation of mind, much above all human pomp and grandeur, and made them deſpiſe all the

* The reaſon which Cicero gives for inſtructing his countrymen in the Greek philoſophy is, 'That 'he knew no way ſo effectual of doing good as by 'inſtructing the minds and reforming the morals of 'the youth, which, in the licence of thoſe times, wanted 'every help to reſtrain and correct them;' De divinatione, ii. 2. De finib. i. 3.

Digitized by Google

gratifications of luxury and vanity which their fortune afforded. The Greek arts, and particularly the rhetorical, the grammatical, and critical arts, by which they formed a good ſtyle, both of ſpeaking and writing, were ſtudied by all the nobility of Rome. And, as they were abſolutely neceſſary to enable a man to make a figure, and ſupport his rank in the ſtate *, they

* The author of the dialogue *De Cauſis corruptæ eloquentiæ*, ſpeaking of the incitements to the ſtudy of eloquence in the later times of the common-wealth, expreſſes himſelf in this manner:

'Quanto quiſque plus dicendo poterat, tanto facilius honores aſſequebatur; tanto magis in ipſis honoribus collegas ſuos anteibat, tanto plus apud principes gratiæ, plus auctoritatis apud patres, plus notitiæ ac nominis apud plebem parabat. Hi clientelis etiam exterarum nationum redundabant; hos ituri in provincias magiſtratus reverebantur, hos reverſi colebant, hos et præturæ et conſulatus vocare ultro videbantur; hi ne privati quidem ſine poteſtate erant, cum et populum et ſenatum conſilio et auctoritate regerent; quin immo ſibi ipſi perſuaſerant neminem ſine eloquentia aut aſſequi poſſe in civitate aut tueri conſpicuum et eminentem locum.'

And, a little afterwards,

Digitized by Google

were so much studied and practised, that they alone were sufficient to employ their whole lives. And, even with respect to philosophy, there was hardly a man of any note or eminence in Rome that was not addicted to one sect or another; and the philosophy professed by the great men of those days is a part of their history as well known as any other*.

'Ita ad summa eloquentiæ præmia, magna etiam 'necessitas accedebat, et commoda. Disertum haberi 'pulchrum et glorioſum; sed contra mutum et elinguem 'videri, deforme habebatur. Ergo non minus rubore 'quam præmiis stimulabantur; ne clientulorum loco 'potius quam patronorum, numerarentur; ne traditæ 'a majoribus necessitudines ad alios transirent; ne 'tanquam inertes et non suffecturi honoribus, aut non 'impetrarent, aut impetratos male tuerentur;' Cap. 36. 37.

* The old man Chremes, in the beginning of the Andrian of Terence, speaking of the passions of youth at that time, says,

Quod plerique omnes faciunt adoleſcentuli,
Ut animum ad aliquod ſtudium adjungant, aut equos
Alere, aut canes ad venandum, *aut ad philoſophos.*
Andrian, v. 28.

Thus it appears that, among the youth of that age, a passion for philosophy was as common as for hounds and horses.

Digitized by Google

The firſt hero the Romans formed upon the Greek model was Scipio Africanus the younger, and the laſt man of any note, produced by the manners and diſcipline of the ſtate was C. Marius. After his time, there was no man eminent either as a general or a ſtateſman, during the period I ſpeak of, that was not a ſcholar.

Thus it appears, from fact and experience as well as theory, that the cultivation of arts and ſciences is abſolutely neceſſary in a wealthy and luxurious nation. But what arts and ſciences? Is it the ſtudy of botany, ſo much in faſhion at preſent? Is it the knowledge of ſhells and inſects? Is it facts of natural hiſtory? or is it the ſcience of quantity, the knowledge of the properties of lines, figures, and numbers? Of this ſcience I have a high eſteem. I know it is very uſeful in the arts of life, and in explaining many things in nature; but I have always held it to be no more than the handmaid of philoſophy; nor do I know that it has ever formed a hero or a patriot, a man eminent in the field or in the ſenate. There only remains then that learning which preſerved

Digitized by Google

virtue ſo long among the Romans, and threw a ſplendor upon the later times of that nation, ſuch as never illuminated the degenerate days of any other.

There is one other uſe of antient learning, and which perhaps to ſome will recommend it more than any thing I have hitherto ſaid in praiſe of it; and it is this, that it beſt teaches the arts of luxury; by which I mean not only the elegance and magnificence with which they adorned luxury, and raiſed it above mere ſenſuality, but chiefly thoſe arts they employed to prevent, as far as was poſſible, the bad effects of it both upon body and mind. For, beſides their athletic exerciſes, which, at the ſame time that they whetted the appetite for ſuch enjoyments, gave ſtrength and vigour to the body, they uſed bathing, anointing, rubbing, and other arts to preſerve their health; ſo that, though the luxury of the Romans, at the time I ſpeak of, was very much greater than ours, yet I aver the fact to be, that there were not among them near ſo many diſeaſed and deformed by luxury, and rendered incapable of all buſi-

Digitized by Google

neſs, as among us. This we are well aſſured of, not only from the public hiſtories of thoſe times, but from the private memoirs of them, preſerved in that voluminous, and at the ſame time moſt valuable epiſtolary correſpondence of Cicero, which has come down to us; and alſo from the anecdotes which Suetonius has related of the lives of the firſt emperors, ſome of whom were the greateſt monſters of luxury and intemperance of every kind that we read of in hiſtory. In ſhort, our luxury, as it is managed, is little better than the ſenſuality of barbarians; nor does it differ much from the intemperance of ſavages in ſpirituous liquors, except in this, that, though that exceſs be of all others the moſt deſtructive both to mind and body, yet, by means of the ſimplicity of the reſt of their diet, the air and exerciſe which they take, and certain antient arts that they uſe, ſuch as bathing and anointing, it does not hurt them near ſo much as our luxury, which we think ſo much more refined: And there is one thing which I would have our men who pretend to taſte and elegance conſider, and that is the deformity which our conſtant intemperance

Digitized by Google

in eating and drinking produces, and which is not to be found among the barbarous nations. For men that would be thought to have a taſte for *beauty*, ſhould ſtudy it in their perſons, at leaſt as much as in their dreſs, and the ornaments of their houſes and gardens. And there is another thing which, I think, deſerves moſt ſerious conſideration, and that is the great increaſe of the crime of ſuicide among us of late. This, I think, may be in a great meaſure ſtated to the account of our barbarous *unlearned luxury*, by which the body is at laſt ſo oppreſſed and overlaid, and the ſpirits ſo affected, that life becomes an intolerable burden. The Romans, it is true, practiſed this kind of death much, but it was only to avoid the ſtroke of the executioner; or it was from a better motive, —to ſave their eſtates for the behoof of their families, which would have been confiſcated, if they had waited till ſentence was pronounced againſt them; by which means many an eſtate and family were preſerved, under ſuch emperors as Tiberius and Nero. And no doubt they ſometimes choſe to go out of life, when they were preſſed by any

Digitized by Google

calamity, public or private, which they thought insupportable. But I cannot at present recollect one instance of any Roman who, from a *tædium vitæ*, low spirits, weak nerves, or whatever other name we chuse to give to the effects of intemperance, and the indulgence of pleasure without any moderation, art, or œconomy, destroyed himself.

Thus I have endeavoured to recommend antient learning, not only as it directs us to the noblest pursuits in human life, but from its meanest use, the improvement of our luxury, and the making us, if not men of virtue, at least men of *learned luxury*. And, upon the whole, I think, I may claim some merit with the public, by this attempt to restore, or preserve where it is not yet lost, antient learning, as a thing not only of elegance and ornament, but, in the present state of this nation, of the greatest public utility.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google